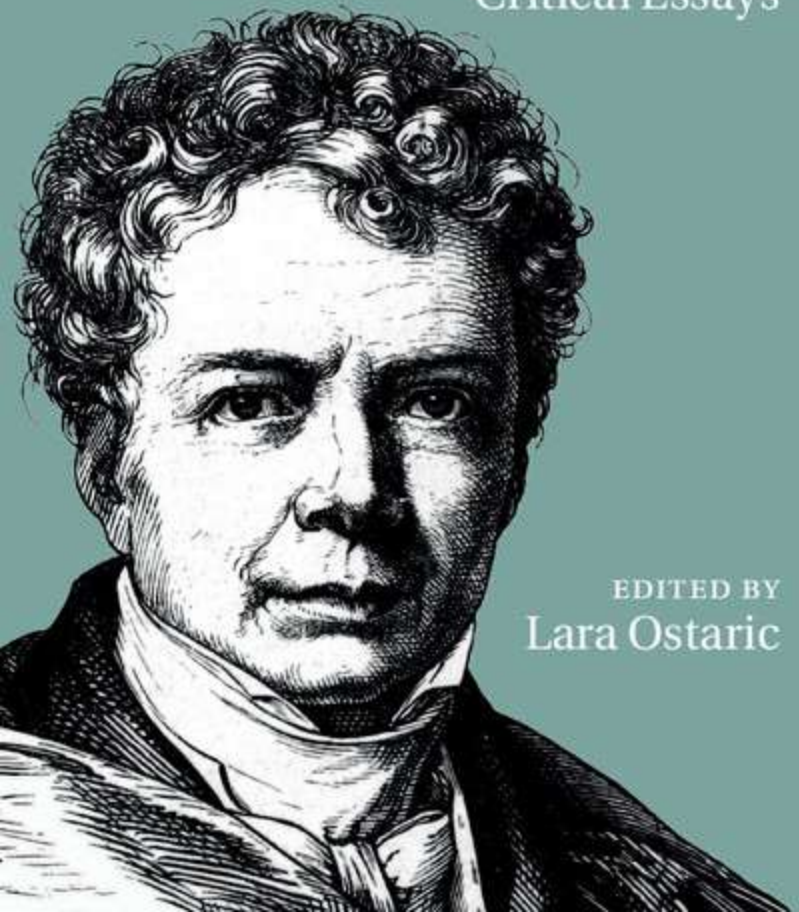
Interpreting Schelling

Critical Essays



EDITED BY
Lara Ostaric

INTERPRETING SCHELLING

This book is the first collection of essays on Schelling in English that systematically explores the historical development of his philosophy. It addresses all four periods of Schelling's thought: his Transcendental Philosophy and Philosophy of Nature, his System of Identity [*Identitätsphilosophie*], his System of Freedom, and his Positive Philosophy. The essays examine the constellation of philosophical ideas that motivated the formation of Schelling's thought, as well as those later ones for which his philosophy laid the foundation. They therefore relate Schelling's philosophy to a broad range of systematic issues that are of importance to us today: metaphysics, epistemology, aesthetics, ethics, our modern conceptions of individual autonomy, philosophy of history, philosophy of religion, political philosophy, and theology. The result is a new interpretation of Schelling's place in the history of German Idealism as an inventive and productive thinker.

LARA OSTARIC is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Temple University. She has published on Schelling and Kant in *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, *Kantian Review*, *Kant-Studien*, and *Inquiry*.

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Method of citation

Where references are by author and year of publication, full reference information may be found in the Bibliography.

Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling

Citations to Schelling's texts are generally given parenthetically, although additional references are sometimes included in the footnotes to the essays. The following abbreviations have been used in referring to standard editions of Schelling's works:

AA *Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe, im Auftrag der Schelling-Kommission der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, ed. Jörg Jantzen, Thomas Buchheim, Wilhelm G. Jacobs, and Siegbert Peetz. Stuttgart: Cotta, 1976–. (All citations are first to the series [in upper case roman numerals], followed by volume and page numbers.)

SW *Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schellings sämmtliche Werke*, ed. K.F.A. Schelling, I Abtheilung vols. 1–10, II Abtheilung vols. 1–4. Stuttgart: Cotta, 1856–61. (All references are first to the section number [in upper case roman numerals], followed by the relevant volume and page numbers.) This edition is more readily available as reprinted in *Schellings Werke*, ed. M. Schröter. Munich: Beck, 1927. The reprinted edition sets the SW pagination in the margins to the text, with the exception of the *Philosophie der Offenbarung*, "Einleitung," which is contained in its Ergänzungsband 6, page-identical with SW 11.3.

AS *Ausgewählte Schriften*, ed. Manfred Frank, 6 vols. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1985. (All references are first to the relevant volume, followed by page numbers.)

The following abbreviations have been used in referring to Schelling's writings:

AAE *Anhang zu dem Aufsatz des Herrn Eschenmayer betreffend den wahren Begriff der Naturphilosophie und die richtige Art ihre Probleme aufzulösen* (1801), pub. in *SW* 1.4 as *Ueber den wahren Begriff der Naturphilosophie und die richtige Art ihre Probleme aufzulösen* [*On the True Concept of the Philosophy of Nature and the Correct Way to Solve Its Problems*]

CP *Ueber die Construction in der Philosophie* (1802) [*On Construction in Philosophy*]

DSP *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie* (1801) [*Presentation of My System of Philosophy*]

EE *Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie* (1st edn., 1799) [*First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature*]

FD *Fernere Darstellungen aus dem System der Philosophie* (1802) [*Further Presentations from the System of Philosophy*]

GPP *Grundlegung der positiven Philosophie: Münchner Vorlesung WS 1832/33 und SS 1833* [*Foundations of the Positive Philosophy*]

PK *Philosophie der Kunst* (1802–3) [*The Philosophy of Art*]

StI *System des transzendentalen Idealismus* (1800) [*System of Transcendental Idealism*]

VM *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums* (delivered 1802, pub. 1803) [*On University Studies*]

VNP *Ueber das Verhältniß der Naturphilosophie zur Philosophie überhaupt* (1802) [*On the Relationship of the Philosophy of Nature to Philosophy in General*]

Immanuel Kant

Citations from the *Critique of Pure Reason* are located by reference to the pagination of Kant's first (A) and/or second (B) editions. All other passages from Kant's works are cited by the volume and page number in the standard Akademie edition of Kant's works. These references are preceded by an abbreviation or a short title for the work cited, except where the context makes that obvious. Since standard translations of the *Critique of Pure Reason* provide the "A" and "B" page numbers and modern editions of Kant's other works always give the Akademie edition pagination, page numbers for translations have been omitted. Unless otherwise indicated in the individual essays, all translations are from The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant (1992–).

The following abbreviations/short titles have been used in referring to Kant's writings:

Kant AA	*Kants gesammelte Schriften*, ed. the Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften (formerly the Königlich Preussische and later Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin), 29 vols. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter (formerly Georg Reimer), 1900–
KrV	*Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1st edn. 1781, 2nd edn. 1787) [*Critique of Pure Reason*]
KpV	*Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (1788) [*Critique of Practical Reason*]
KU	*Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1st edn. 1790, 2nd edn. 1793, 3rd edn. 1799) [*Critique of the Power of Judgment*]
MM	*Die Metaphysik der Sitten* (1797) [*The Metaphysics of Morals*]
Groundwork	*Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1785) [*Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*]
Prolegomena	*Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik, die als Wissenschaft wird auftreten können* (1783) [*Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics that Will be Able to Come Forward as Science*]
Religion	*Die Religion innerhalb der Grenzen der bloβen Vernunft* (1st edn. 1793, 2nd edn. 1794) [*Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*]

Johann Gottlieb Fichte

Fichte AA	*J.G. Fichte: Gesamtausgabe der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, ed. Erich Fuchs, Reinhard Lauth, Hans Jacobs, and Hans Gliwitzky, 42 vols. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog Verlag, 1962–2012. (Cited first according to the series in roman numerals followed by volume and page numbers.)
Fichte SW	*Fichtes sämmtliche Werke*, ed. I.H. Fichte, 8. vols. Berlin: Veit, 1845–6.
Fichte SW1	*Fichtes Werke*, ed. I.H. Fichte, 11 vols. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971.

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

HW	*Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Marcus Michel. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971.

Introduction

Lara Ostaric

Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling entered the Tübinger Stift, a Lutheran theological seminary, in 1790 when he was only fifteen years old. His roommates were Hölderlin and Hegel, who were five years older than he. Their meeting in the Stift was a unique event in history because it offered the conditions for the most productive period in the history of German philosophy. The philosophical milieu in the Tübinger Stift was shaped to a great extent by the influence of Jacobi and the Pantheism Controversy and the dogmatic reading of Kant's practical philosophy by the Tübingen theologians. The Tübingen theologians (Gottlob Christian Storr, Johann Friedrich Flatt, Friedrich Gottlieb Süskind, and Georg Christian Rapp) used Kant's Postulates of Pure Practical Reason to reinforce their orthodox theological positions. In other words, they intentionally interpreted Kant's postulates so that God, freedom, and immortality were no longer merely objects of practical reason, but connected with doctrines of revelation. The *Stiftler* were determined to preserve Kant's critical spirit by using Kant against the self-proclaimed Tübingen "Kantians." In addition, they received the French Revolution with great enthusiasm, which further encouraged their rebelliousness against the orthodoxies of the Stift as well as their foundational philosophical ambitions, which are best summarized in the following passage from Schelling's letter to Hegel on January 6, 1795: "Who would wish to bury himself in the dust of Antiquity when the course of *his* time tears him towards and with itself in every moment. I live and weave presently in philosophy. Philosophy has not come to its end yet. Kant has given the results: the premises are still missing. And who can understand the results without the premises?" (AA III.1: 16).[1] In this spirit, Schelling, while still thinking of himself as a true Kantian, insists that philosophy must begin with an absolutely certain first principle, namely, freedom: "Philosophy must begin with the *Unconditioned*. But the

[1] Schelling citations are my own translation.

question presents itself what the center is of the *Unconditioned*, the 'I,' or the 'not-I.' If this question is answered, then *everything* is answered. On my view, the highest principle of philosophy is the pure absolute 'I,' i.e., the 'I' insofar as it is merely an 'I,' not determined by objects, but posited [*gesezt*] through *Freedom*. The A and Ω of all philosophy is freedom" (Letter to Hegel, February 4, 1795, AA III.1: 22). However, while Fichte, inspired by Reinhold, believed that the unconditioned principle is to be found in the Cartesian self-certainty of consciousness, for Schelling the unconditioned principle is something that transcends consciousness and is the unifying ground of consciousness and nature. Fichte said that the Unconditioned is to be thought in the *I*, but for Schelling it is to be thought in the I *as such*.[2]

Among the *Stiftler*, Schelling had a reputation of being a prodigy. Already at the age of fifteen he had an excellent command of Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Arabic, was fluent in French, English, Italian, and Spanish, and had a basic knowledge of Sanskrit. He published his first philosophical essay, *On the Possibility of an Absolute Form of Philosophy* [*Über die Möglichkeit einer Form der Philosophie überhaupt*], in 1794 when he was only nineteen years old. His academic career matched his reputation and, unlike the careers of his older roommates, was marked by one success after another. He was given a professorship in Jena when he was only twenty-three years old. However, the same success did not follow the legacy of his philosophy. One of the reasons for the negative reception of his philosophy was its rejection by Hegel in his 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*.[3] For a long time Schelling was treated as a stepping-stone from Fichte to Hegel and as a protean thinker who was constantly changing his philosophical views so that no definite philosophical position can be ascribed to him with certainty. Consequently, relatively little attention was given to his thought.[4]

It is not until the twentieth century that philosophers will engage again Schelling's thought in more depth. I have in mind here above all the influential studies of Schelling by Heidegger, Walter Schulz, Dieter Jähnig,

[2] This is Manfred Frank's paraphrase of Dieter Henrich's lecture in Heidelberg, winter semester 1965–6 in Frank 1985: 24.

[3] In the Preface to the *Phenomenology*, Hegel unfairly characterizes Schelling's conception of intellectual intuition as "the night in which all cows are black" and, hence, as a form of philosophical cognition which does not allow individual determinations.

[4] The exception here is Schelling's strong influence on English Romantic poets (especially Samuel Taylor Coleridge) and the influence of his critique of Hegel on Kierkegaard, who attended Schelling's Berlin lectures in the 1840s.

and Manfred Frank in Germany, and by Vladimir Jankélévitch and Jean-François Marquet in France.[5] Schelling influenced not only philosophers but also theologians of the twentieth century, both Catholic and Protestant, Xavier Tilliette and Paul Tillich, respectively. The Anglophone philosophical reception of Schelling was considerably delayed and only in recent years have some efforts been made to rethink Schelling's tarnished legacy.[6] This volume is a further contribution to those recent efforts. It is the first collection of essays in English[7] that systematically traces the historical development of his thought from the Transcendental Philosophy and *Naturphilosophie* of his early period (1794–1800), through his *Identitätsphilosophie* (1801–9), and then *Freiheitsschrift* and the *Weltalter* of his middle period (1809–27), and, finally, his Positive and Negative Philosophy and critique of Hegel in his late period (1827–54). The volume offers a more nuanced understanding of German Idealism than the one offered by an oversimplified narrative "from Kant to Hegel,"[8] which portrays this philosophical movement as a teleological progression that begins with Kant, is advanced by Fichte and Schelling, and culminates in Hegel's system, which synthesizes all prior views. To be sure, Schelling's so-called objective idealism, with an unconditioned principle which transcends both subject and object, marks a move away from Fichte's subjective idealism and paves a path to Hegel's system. However, by paying greater attention to the constellation of the ideas that motivated Schelling's thought, it is possible to appreciate him more as an original thinker, a thinker whose impact has reached beyond the original stage of German Idealism, and whose ideas are of importance to us today.

Some examples of how Schelling's thought still resonates with us today (and the list is by no means intended to be exhaustive) are the following. Schelling's view that there are aspects of the self that continuously escape self-consciousness is present in Slavoj Žižek's provocative work on Schelling, which further indicates the ongoing relevance of Schelling's philosophy for psychoanalysis. The central question of Schelling's early system, namely, the question "How must a world be constituted for a moral

[5] See Heidegger 1971, Schulz 1955, Jähnig 1966, Frank 1975, 1985, Jankélévitch 1933, and Marquet 1968.

[6] See for example Bowie 1993, Snow 1996, Beiser 2002: 465–595, Kosch 2006a: 66–121, and Shaw 2010.

[7] Norman/Welchman 2001 and Wirth 2005 are the only available collections of essays on Schelling in English. These collections, however, relate Schelling exclusively to issues in contemporary Continental philosophy.

[8] *Von Kant bis Hegel* is the title of Richard Kroner's influential study of German Idealism. See Kroner 1961. However, Hegel himself deserves credit for this teleological understanding of German Idealism because his writings on the history of philosophy show that this is how he understood his own role as the culminating phase in the history of this movement.

being?,"[9] which is also the question of the unity of theoretical and practical reason that Schelling was inspired to pursue by Kant's third *Critique*, is the main motivating force of his *Naturphilosophie*. His *Naturphilosophie* developed beyond Kant's critique of mechanism and paved the way for a teleological conception of nature that is not radically different from the underlying structure of the human spirit. Contemporary environmental studies can draw inspiration from Schelling's *Naturphilosophie*. His aesthetics and philosophy of art assigned a unique place to art, a place that was traditionally assigned to logic in the history of philosophy, namely, art as the "organon" or instrument of philosophy. In other words, Schelling admits the limitations of philosophy, and for him it is no longer a self-sufficient practice. It is a practice that needs art insofar as art is understood as the object of a philosophy of art that interprets self-consciousness, which is the condition of philosophical practice in its objective form. Schelling's Philosophy of Identity attempts to understand the identity between nature and spirit not as a simple identity but as a complex identity that takes into account the difference of the members that comprise one and the same whole. Schelling's understanding of identity between mind and nature resonates in the mind–body debates of contemporary analytic philosophy, especially the works of Geach and Davidson. His conception of the freedom of the will (in his *Freiheitsschrift*) as freedom that exceeds reason's determination is Schelling's attempt to provide a positive conception of moral evil – one that, he thinks, is lacking in Kant. Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* also anticipates the later existentialist tradition insofar as it grounds our agency in a reality that exceeds the grasp of reason. Schelling's Negative Philosophy is the locus of his critique of Hegel's view that reflection entirely determines and exhausts existence. Schelling's view that being precedes all reflection entails the idea of historical and empirical contingency and thus paved the way to Marxist materialism and to other current European philosophies that are keen on emphasizing the limits of our rationality.

While there is much more continuity to Schelling's thought than is generally acknowledged, the different stages in the development of his philosophical system should not be seen as a sign of intellectual immaturity, nor as the inevitable result of the influence of many different

[9] Bernstein 2003: 185. The citation is from the so called "Oldest Program for a System of German Idealism [*Das älteste Systemprogramm des deutschen Idealismus*]," a short fragment published and titled by Franz Rosenzweig in 1918. While the fragment is written in Hegel's handwriting, it expresses mainly Schelling's and also Hölderlin's ideas.

philosophical positions. In spite of his early ambitions as a young prodigy to move beyond Kant's modest philosophical system (its dependence on common experience both in theoretical and practical domains, its claims to ignorance of things as they are in themselves, and its lack of an absolutely certain principle as its basis),[10] Schelling's reformulations of his own philosophical system are perhaps an indication of *his* modesty and his recognition that, while rigorous and systematic, philosophical reflection is not omnipotent before the complexity of the human condition.

***

The volume comprises eleven essays. In "The Early Schelling on the Unconditioned," Eric Watkins clarifies how the early Schelling comes to employ the notion of the "unconditioned" at the center of his philosophical project. In particular, Watkins provides an analysis of central passages in two of Schelling's early essays, *On the Possibility of an Absolute Form of Philosophy* [*Über die Möglichkeit einer Form der Philosophie überhaupt*] (1794) and *Of the I as the Principle of Philosophy, or On the Unconditional in Human Knowledge* [*Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie oder über das Unbedingte im menschlichen Wissen*] (1795) in order to argue that (without denying the influence of other figures on Schelling's early thought, such as Fichte or Reinhold) it is Kant's specific views on the unconditioned that play a crucial role in the development of a number of fundamental features of Schelling's early thought.

Michael N. Forster, in his essay "Schelling and Skepticism," argues that Hegel's accusations in his Introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* that Schelling's philosophy is dogmatic and vulnerable to skepticism are not entirely warranted. They are true of a brief period while Schelling was still in Jena, 1801–2, but they do not apply to Schelling's career as a whole. Forster shows that Schelling's views on skepticism and its relation to philosophy went through three different phases. The first of these is a Fichte-inspired position that he held during the period 1794–1800; the second a Hegel-inspired position that he held briefly in 1802–3; and the third a Romanticism-inspired position that he adopted around 1821. At the end of his essay, Forster considers a fourth phase of Schelling's attempt to grapple with skepticism, namely, his Positive Philosophy as a modification of his Romanticism-inspired position.

In "The Concept of Life in Early Schelling," I show how in the early stages of his *Naturphilosophie* Schelling is motivated by the issue of the necessary correspondence between the self and nature and, therefore,

[10] On the "modesty" of Kant's philosophical system see Ameriks 2000, ch. 1: 37–77.

attempts to demonstrate that nature is not a dead object of self-consciousness, but something that is at the same time a subject and its own object. Nature must not be conceived as a dead mechanism, but as a living organization and as an "analogue of reason" (AA 1.8: 31) and freedom because to be one's own subject and object is to be self-determined. This is what Schelling considers to be the essential characteristic of *life*. The essay traces the development of his conception of life through three seminal works of his early *Naturphilosophie*: the *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* [*Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur*] (1797), *On the World-Soul* [*Von der Weltseele*] (1798), and *The First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* [*Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie*] (1799). This is necessary in order to show that from the very beginning Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* and his method of the construction of nature presuppose a common ground of mind and nature, one that unifies both and can be identified with neither. Thus, Schelling's early writings, contrary to the prevalent view, are part of a continuous progressive development in his philosophical system.

Paul Guyer, in his essay "Knowledge and Pleasure in the Aesthetics of Schelling," analyzes central passages from Schelling's 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism* [*System des transzendentalen Idealismus*] and 1802–3 lectures on *The Philosophy of Art* [*Philosophie der Kunst*] in order to show how Schelling adopted and transformed Kant's philosophy of fine art. Guyer argues that Kant created a synthesis of the new aesthetics of free play, developed in mid-eighteenth-century Scotland and Germany, with the Classical theory that aesthetic experience is a distinctive form of the apprehension of truth. Schelling's aesthetics favors a purely cognitivist approach and the view that aesthetic experience is pleasurable only because it releases us from the pain of an inescapable contradiction in the human condition.

In "'Exhibiting the Particular in the Universal': Philosophical Construction and Intuition in Schelling's Philosophy of Identity (1801–1804)," Daniel Breazeale discusses Schelling's method of philosophical construction in his Philosophy of Identity. Influenced by Kant's *Metaphysical Foundations* (where "to construct" a concept is "to exhibit [*darstellen*] a priori the intuition corresponding to it") as well as Fichte's later development of this philosophical method, Schelling develops his own new conception of philosophical construction. Breazeale proceeds by focusing on eight of the more salient features of Schelling's method of construction: (1) its "absolute" standpoint, (2) its principle (the law of rational identity), (3) its organ (intellectual intuition), (4) its actual method (exhibition of the

particular in the universal), (5) its elements (ideas of reason), (6) its product (the System of Identity), (7) its truth and reality, and (8) the unteachable, innate capacity for intellectual intuition (philosophical genius). In his conclusion, he offers an examination and criticism of Schelling's conception of philosophical construction.

Manfred Frank's essay, "'Identity of Identity and Non-Identity': Schelling's Path to the 'Absolute System of Identity,'" focuses on the core thought of Schelling's Absolute System of Identity, which concerns a form of identity that is not simple, but rather conceived in such a way that two different things pertain entirely to one and the same whole. Frank proceeds by describing the problems in early modern philosophy for which Schelling's notion of identity attempts to provide a solution. He goes on to discuss the figures from the history of philosophy who influenced Schelling's mature Philosophy of Identity, and he shows the relevance of Schelling's notion of identity for contemporary mind–body theories. In conclusion, Frank addresses the difference between Schelling's and Hegel's notions of identity.

In "Idealism and Freedom in Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift*," Michelle Kosch distinguishes between a "formal" conception of freedom (i.e., a characterization of free will that allows for a distinction between imputable and non-imputable behavior) and a "substantive" conception of freedom (i.e., the conception of free will as a source of substantive moral imperatives). Kosch contends that Schelling's view in the *Freiheitsschrift*, according to which idealism offers a merely formal conception of freedom, suggests that he means to employ aspects of the accounts of formal freedom provided by Kant and Fichte while rejecting their accounts of substantive freedom. Kosch further argues that Schelling's rejection of the substantive component of Kant's and Fichte's accounts undermines the philosophical motivation for his own early compatibilism, and that his alternative substantive account turns out to be inconsistent with the account of formal freedom he endorses in the *Freiheitsschrift*.

In her essay, "Beauty Reconsidered: Freedom and Virtue in Schelling's Aesthetics," Jennifer Dobe argues that Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* (1809), contrary to the prevalent view, offers resources for identifying Schelling's new and innovative approach to aesthetics and for rescuing his aesthetics from the static and lifeless system of his earlier Philosophy of Identity. By focusing on the key passages from Schelling's 1807 speech to the Akademie der Wissenschaften in Munich (*Über das Verhältnis der bildenden Künste zu der Natur*) and the *Weltalter* fragments of 1811–15, Dobe shows how Schelling begins to augment his aesthetics on the basis of the new

conception of freedom advanced in the *Freiheitsschrift*. This new philosophical outlook allows Schelling to emphasize the dynamic nature of aesthetic experience, the *attraction* of the observer to the object of beauty, and the irreducible particularity of beauty.

In "Nature and Freedom in Schelling and Adorno," Andrew Bowie shows how the dialectical tension between existence and its ground, self-determined reason and its "other," in Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* opens up space for a non-dogmatic understanding of "nature" (i.e., an understanding of nature as something that needs to be legitimated and not something used as a legitimation) and its relationship to the subject and thus to freedom. In the ground/existence relationship, Adorno, like Schelling, seeks a further self-critical turn, namely, the idea that because reason cannot be self-grounding it must incorporate a sense of its historicity. Their responses are not only significant in the light of contemporary scientistic attempts to reduce the realm of self-determination to a causal account of nature, but also because they offer an alternative to the neo-Hegelian approach of Robert Pippin, who thinks nature can be "left behind" by a normative account of human self-determination.

Günter Zöller's essay, "Church and State: Schelling's Political Philosophy of Religion," focuses on the relation between church and state in Schelling's *Stuttgart Private Lecture Course* from 1810 and his *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* from 1809. Zöller proceeds by presenting, in section I, the historical background of Schelling's political philosophy of religion in early modern thinking and in Kant's reconfiguration of the relation between ethics, politics, and religion. In section II, he presents the development of Schelling's political philosophy from a liberal and legal conception of the state to an absolutist and ethical conception. In section III of his essay, Zöller discusses Schelling's philosophico-theological critique of the state. In the last section, he assesses Schelling's shift from proposing religion's integration into the state to advocating the state's subordination under religion.

The central focus of Fred Rush's essay, "Schelling's Critique of Hegel," is Schelling's Berlin lectures, delivered in the 1840s and early 1850s, where Schelling deploys a broad distinction between two approaches to philosophy: "negative" and "positive." Schelling's Positive Philosophy contains his conservative views concerning the necessity for a "new mythology" and "revelation." His concept of Negative Philosophy, argues Rush, is characterized by an emphasis on the discovery of purportedly overarching, a priori, and strictly necessary rational structures that govern the world, at the expense of the individuality of entities. Schelling identifies this view

with Hegel's philosophy, which he believes is philosophically inadequate. Rush's essay poses the question of the extent to which Schelling's critique of Hegel is valid. His main claim is that Schelling's criticisms largely retain their force, although some of them show the late Schelling to be closer to Hegel on some points than the philosophical polemic would at first suggest.

CHAPTER 1

The early Schelling on the unconditioned

Eric Watkins

Considerable attention has been devoted in recent decades to understanding how Schelling's early philosophical works emerged out of the thought of the post-Kantian figures who were active in Jena and Tübingen (and beyond) in the early 1790s. Part of the justification for this attention derives from the fact that these figures were interested in nothing less than the very foundation and possibility of all philosophical thought during a period of arguably unparalleled flourishing of philosophical thought. Further, Schelling in particular was at the center of this development, since two of his earliest works, which contributed significantly to his being appointed professor of philosophy in Jena at the tender age of twenty-three, namely *Über die Möglichkeit einer Form der Philosophie überhaupt* (1794) [hereafter: *Form-Schrift*] and *Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie oder über das Unbedingte im menschlichen Wissen* (1795) [hereafter: *Ich-Schrift*], focus on precisely this issue by setting out a foundationalist program and providing a first attempt at working out its fundamental principles, which is crucial insofar as it provides the basic framework for his later, more mature philosophical efforts.

Since Schelling was familiar with Fichte's groundbreaking publications, including those that were fresh off the press, and he was still only in his teens when composing these earliest works, it is tempting to think that he was primarily following Fichte's lead. Thus Reinhard Lauth and Frederick Beiser argue that Schelling was heavily influenced by Fichte, engaged in an essentially Fichtean project, utilizing essentially Fichtean tools (terms, distinctions, assumptions).[1] Yet other scholars have rejected the idea that Schelling's position mimics Fichte's, seeing a fundamental independence in his thought.[2] This view has significant

[1] See Lauth 1975, who distinguishes three distinct phases of Schelling's engagement with Fichte between 1795 and 1801, and Beiser 2002: 470.

[2] See, for example, Henrich 2004: 1609, 1651, who emphasizes that Fichte's foundationalist project is essentially epistemological with its focus on certainty and acts of thinking, whereas Schelling's more

historical support insofar as Schelling was an extremely gifted and precocious student, emerging as an intellectual leader at the Tübinger Stift, even rebelling at times against the theological orthodoxy there, all of which is indicative of an independent mind, not the passivity of a follower.[3] Also, although a series of at times vitriolic exchanges in the early 1800s revealed fundamental differences between Fichte's and Schelling's positions, their earlier texts are often read as showing that many of these differences were already at least implicitly present well before the explicit breakdown of the intellectual partnership that each had tried to cultivate, albeit ultimately in vain.[4]

As a result, scholars have offered a variety of proposals about which figures were most influential in the formation of Schelling's earliest philosophical views.[5] Manfred Frank, for example, has suggested that it was Hölderlin, Schelling's roommate at the Stift, and his radical new views on the essential unity of judgment and of being that provided the crucial impetus to the emergence of Schelling's early position.[6] By contrast, Birgit Sandkaulen-Bock and Rolf-Peter Horstmann have argued (in different ways) that Schelling was heavily influenced by Jacobi, citing the latter's Spinoza-inspired arguments against philosophy and his (faith-based) commitment to the unconditioned.[7] Alternately, Hartmut Kuhlmann has maintained that Reinhold played a decisive role insofar as Schelling was attempting to establish fundamental principles that are presupposed by Reinhold's Principle of Consciousness.[8] Finally, by painstakingly reconstructing the views of Schelling's main teachers in Tübingen – Gottlob Christian Storr, Jacob Friedrich Abel, and Johann Friedrich Flatt – as well as those of his fellow students, such as Immanuel Carl Diez and Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer, and their close interlocutors, including Johann Benjamin Erhard, Dieter Henrich has devoted extraordinary energies to showing that and how understanding the constellation of figures in Jena and Tübingen is indispensable for reconstructing Schelling's most basic intentions in these early works.

metaphysical orientation does not emphasize certainty. See also Sandkaulen-Bock 1990: 25 and Henrich 2004: 1603, 1612, 1644 for more nuanced differences, both historical and philosophical.

[3] See Henrich 2004: 1562.

[4] See Vater and Wood 2012 for a detailed documentation of the rupture between the two.

[5] Franz 1996 and Horstmann 2000 consider the importance of Schelling's early interest in Plato.

[6] See Frank 1985: 61ff., esp. ch. 4.

[7] Görland 1973: 5–7, 51–61; Sandkaulen-Bock 1990: 12–13, 18, 29; Horstmann 1991: 25–67, esp. 34–40, 45–6, 56–9; and Horstmann 2000: 117–40.

[8] See Kuhlmann 1993: 56, 79. But see also Henrich's argument 2004: 1648–9 that Schelling was, through Diez, already familiar with the grave problems that Reinhold's position faced.

Without at all calling into question the correctness or value of these scholarly contributions, I maintain that what they fail to fully appreciate about the early Schelling is the crucial influence of another of his immediate philosophical predecessors, namely Immanuel Kant. Now in one sense, it is trivially true to assert Kant's importance to the early Schelling's views. For everyone will immediately acknowledge that he is ever present in the discussions that took place in the circles surrounding Schelling. However, this acknowledgment is sometimes treated as a platitudinous truism or at least as having little in the way of specific import. For example, it is commonplace to note that Schelling conceived of his project in terms of finding the missing premises from which Kant's philosophy could be derived as a result, since he describes his project in exactly this way in a letter to Hegel from early January 1795. It is also often remarked that Schelling says that he intends to capture the spirit if not the letter of Kant's philosophy, another clear acknowledgment of Kant's influence. Indeed, Schelling's *Form-Schrift* explicitly notes that Kant was most influential for him. At the same time, these acknowledgments are often still quite generic and are rarely filled out with precise details about what features of Schelling's position derive from which specific aspects of Kant's position.[9] Instead, emphasis is typically placed on Schelling's highly significant (and undeniable) departures from the spirit of Kant's philosophy, such as his acceptance of some version of Spinozism.[10] To remedy this omission, in this chapter I will argue that it is Kant's specific views on the unconditioned that play a crucial role in the development of a number of fundamental features of Schelling's early thought. Specifically, if one asks why Schelling claims that the first principle of his philosophy must be unconditioned – a defining feature of his position – one must, I maintain, take recourse to Kant. This is not to deny that Schelling is influenced by others or goes beyond Kant in non-trivial ways, but rather to emphasize that several central aspects of his view cannot be fully appreciated without understanding exactly how they emerge from Kant's views of the unconditioned.

[9] Manfred Frank and Eckart Förster are two important exceptions to this claim. Frank 1985: 38–47 argues that Kant's specific views on self-consciousness are crucial to understanding Schelling's early position. Förster 2012: 223–7 argues that Schelling draws on Kant's treatment of organisms in section 76 of the third *Critique*. The influence of Kant I discuss below is distinct from, yet fully compatible with, both of these approaches.

[10] See, e.g., Horstmann 1991: 57–9, for a more detailed description of specific points of difference between Schelling and Kant, involving, e.g., different understandings of the analytic-synthetic distinction and the categories and forms of judgment.

To put us in a position to see how Schelling's position and argument depend on Kant's views of the unconditioned, I present, in the first section, an outline of Kant's project in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and his views of reason and the unconditioned. In the second section, I provide a sketch of the most basic features of Schelling's project as it is developed in the *Form-Schrift*, focusing on how his argument for several specific features of the first principle he identifies is based on Kant's considerations concerning the unconditioned. In the third section, I focus on the *Ich-Schrift*, noting the main ways in which it represents an advance over the *Form-Schrift* and how these changes reflect a continued dependence on Kant despite the emergence of decidedly non-Kantian elements. In the fourth section, I provide a closer analysis and evaluation of two central features of Schelling's argument by responding to a series of objections raised by Dieter Henrich and by taking note of two subtle, but consequential shifts in the way in which Schelling employs the notions of the conditioned, its conditions, and the unconditioned that Kant had introduced. In this way we will be able to see that Kant's specific views on the unconditioned play a crucial and underappreciated role in the development of fundamental aspects of Schelling's early philosophy.

I Kant, reason, and the unconditioned

Though Kant's project shifts in subtle but highly significant ways from the first to the third *Critique* and it was commonplace for post-Kantians to pick up on whatever aspects of Kant's philosophy interested them and to disregard those doctrines that they found inconvenient or deemed inconsistent with his more fundamental insights, it is still useful for present purposes to have Kant's overall project in the *Critique of Pure Reason* in mind. In undertaking a critique, or analysis, of pure reason, Kant is interested in exploring the possibility of the kind of substantive a priori cognition that pure reason is often taken to be able to support, e.g., in the guise of the claims of traditional metaphysics. The results that Kant arrives at are that we can have synthetic a priori cognition only of objects given to us in sensibility (appearances) and that objects not given to us in sensibility (things in themselves) can be thought but not cognized. Since the objects of traditional metaphysics, such as God, the soul, and our freedom, are not, Kant thinks, objects that can be given to us in sensibility, his analysis reveals fundamental limits on what we can cognize, limits that destroy the possibility of traditional metaphysics. As a further twist, Kant adds that we must still use our ideas of the objects of traditional metaphysics, but only

as regulative principles so as to organize appearances in systematic ways since they provide indispensable aid in our attempts at satisfying the robust epistemic standards that are required for scientific cognition.

But what is the nature of the faculty of reason that lies at the heart of Kant's entire project? Kant provides many descriptions of reason, but the most fundamental and also most interesting and innovative one is that it is an active faculty that searches for the *totality* of *conditions* for whatever is *conditioned* and can thus find an appropriate resting place only by identifying the *unconditioned*.[11] Kant introduces this characterization of reason by showing how it can account for syllogisms in logic by means of the logical use of reason. The basic idea is that a syllogism is a rational relation between two premises and a conclusion where the premises of a syllogism contain the conditions of its conclusion, which can thus be said to be conditioned by what is contained in its premises. Accordingly, different kinds of syllogisms depend on the different kinds of logical conditioning relations (e.g., categorical, hypothetical, and disjunctive). Further, once reason has identified the premises from which a given cognition follows, it will continue to search for further premises from which the original premises will in turn follow as conclusions. The net result is that reason seeks to identify a series of interconnected syllogisms reaching from more specific cognitions lower down to ever more general cognitions higher up. In fact reason will not rest until it has found *first* self-evident principles that are unconditioned by any others. In this way, the first *Critique* is interested in finding first principles of philosophy to carry out its systematic ambitions.

Crucially, Kant extends the scope of reason beyond syllogisms by introducing what he calls the real use of reason. Whereas the logical use of reason pertains to the different conditioning relations between *cognitions* in syllogisms, the real use of reason pertains to the conditioning relations that obtain between *objects*. Though Kant never provides an exhaustive list of real conditioning relations, he identifies the following as instances: (1) the magnitude of the one spatio-temporal entity is conditioned by that of those that precede or surround it; (2) a (real) whole is conditioned by its parts; (3) an effect is conditioned by its cause; (4) what is contingent is conditioned by something necessary; (5) a representation is conditioned by the cognitive power that is responsible for bringing it about; and (6) the possibility of an object is conditioned by the ground that is responsible for its being possible. Despite the obvious and substantive differences between

[11] See Watkins (manuscript).

these instances, there is nonetheless a clear sense in which one item depends on another in a broadly ontological way in each case. Given the ubiquity of such conditioning relations in the world, the real use of reason is an indispensable part of our cognition.

Just as with the logical use of reason, however, so too in its real use reason seeks the completeness of conditions for conditioned objects and thus the unconditioned. By extending the real conditioning relations to the unconditioned, reason demands that objects must be unconditioned with respect to (1) their magnitude, and thereby constitute the world as a totality; (2) their composition, such that that world consists ultimately either of simples or an infinitely divisible series of parts; (3) their causality, requiring uncaused causes, or absolute freedom, or an infinite regress of causes; (4) their actuality, requiring a necessary being; (5) their status as mental states (for representations), requiring an absolute subject, or soul; and (5) their possibility, requiring an *ens realissimum* as the ground of their possibility. In short, in attempting to explain the conditioned objects we experience, reason is committed to the existence of something unconditioned in each of these respects, because, at least for our reason, the existence of something conditioned entails the existence of something unconditioned.

At the same time, Kant also attempts to unmask the fallacies that are allegedly committed in all dogmatic arguments that purport to deliver *cognition* of the world as a totality, the soul, and God. To understand Kant's position properly here, it is crucial to distinguish between cognitive conditions, or conditions on cognition, and the requirements of reason, which can be logical, epistemic, or metaphysical. Given this distinction, it is perfectly appropriate to hold that reason requires that we posit the existence of unconditioned objects, even if it is not possible for us to cognize them. That is, even if we are denied full-fledged cognition of such objects (since we lack the kind of objective justification that is required for cognition proper), it is still possible to have a certain kind of rational faith or belief [*Glaube*] in such objects.[12] In fact, more than possibility is at issue here, since it is a requirement of reason, Kant argues, to assert the existence of something unconditioned if a conditioned object exists.

In sum, by defining reason as the faculty that seeks the unconditioned totality of conditions for what is conditioned, Kant is led to develop some of the most basic features of his innovative position. Epistemologically, reason demands that we seek an unconditioned principle from which all

[12] See Chignell 2007.

other cognitions are to be derived (via syllogisms). At the same time, given the limits on what objects can be given to us in sensibility, we cannot actually attain cognition of the unconditioned objects of traditional metaphysics. Metaphysically, reason requires that we use our ideas of the traditional objects of metaphysics as regulative principles, but more importantly for current purposes, it also demands that we posit the actual existence of something unconditioned that conditions the different objects that we experience as conditioned in various ways. Practically, reason demands belief in the actuality of the unconditioned objects of God, freedom, and the immortality of the soul. With this sketch of Kant's position now in hand, we can turn to Schelling's earliest philosophical work.

II Schelling's *Form-Schrift*

In the *Form-Schrift* Schelling argues that if philosophy is to be a science at all and have the form and content of a science, it must have an absolutely first principle that justifies all other sciences by containing the conditions of their particular forms and contents (AA 1.1: 273). Further, this fundamental first principle must itself, he argues, have an unconditioned form and an unconditioned content where Leibniz and Reinhold are specifically chided for attempting to solve only part of the problem of a "first principle of first principles" by asserting first principles that have either an unconditioned form or an unconditioned content, but not both (AA 1.1: 278).[13] He then argues that the content of the first principle of philosophy must be the I, the form must be "A = A," and the first principle must be "I am I" (or "I = I"). On the basis of the argument for this first principle, he then identifies "Not-I ≠ I" as a second first principle and he then posits a third first principle whose content is unconditioned and form is conditioned with the I positing itself by freely positing the Not-I. Having "solved the problem that was the proper task" of the *Form-Schrift* (AA 1.1: 285), Schelling then compares his solution with those of his predecessors, including Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, and Reinhold, where Kant fares by far the best, since the analytic, the synthetic, and their relation allegedly correspond to Schelling's own three first principles, and Kant's main lapse is simply his failure to have specifically indicated the connection between the original form of the first principle and the particular forms of cognition (i.e., the categories).

[13] All translations are my own.

Although Schelling's *Form-Schrift* thus concerns an extraordinarily fundamental systematic issue – whether philosophy is at all possible as a science and what its most basic first principle would have to be – to understand the distinctive nature of the contribution it makes, we must keep in mind the historical context in which it arose, namely against the backdrop of the systematic aspirations of Kant, Reinhold, Schulze, and Fichte. Though Kant held, as we have seen, that philosophy should be based on first principles, he did not state unambiguously what such principles are supposed to be (even if he did, suggestively, refer to the "I think" as the highest point upon which even logic depends), nor did he provide an explicit derivation of the table of categories from any such first principle, even if the table's having three categories under each of four headings strongly suggests some underlying systematic connection among them. In attempting to make explicit the principle that Kant had left implicit and to derive the most basic forms of thought, Reinhold, in the early 1790s, formulated a Principle of Consciousness and attempted to use it to derive the nature of the faculty through which we are able to have conscious representations as well as the entire content of theoretical and practical philosophy.[14] In his *Aenesidemus* (published anonymously in 1792) Schulze, from the standpoint of a radically skeptical (Humean) position, mounted a devastating attack on Reinhold's Principle of Consciousness, arguing, among other things, that it is ambiguous, cannot be the first principle, and cannot be a premise in any argument that would infer from conscious representations to a faculty of representation. In his "Review of *Aenesidemus*" (February 1794) Fichte conceded that Schulze's criticisms are effective against Reinhold's position, but suggested that a different principle, one more fundamental than Reinhold's, would be immune to the force of Schulze's attack.[15] Further, he published "Concerning the Concept of the *Wissenschaftslehre* or, of So-called 'Philosophy'" (May 1794) as an advertisement for prospective students at Jena, which, without attempting to deliver the *Wissenschaftslehre* itself, considered its form and content as well as the features that a principle must have to be its first principle.

Schelling's *Form-Schrift*, which was then published in September of 1794, articulates a conception of philosophy that bears a striking resemblance to Fichte's conception of a *Wissenschaftslehre*. Both attempt to answer the question of how philosophy can be a science that grounds all other sciences and both do so by analyzing the very concept of a

[14] See Ameriks 2000 and 2006. [15] See Messina 2011.

first principle of philosophy, much like Reinhold. But at an even more detailed level, both distinguish between the form and content of the first principle, which must contain the first principles of all other sciences, and they argue that the form and content of this principle must determine each other. Even further, both refer to the I and the not-I along with three first principles that involve the I, the not-I, and their relations. All of this makes it tempting, as we have seen above, to view Schelling as adopting Fichte's basic position and trying to revise the details of Fichte's position in certain respects just as Fichte had attempted to redress the problems Schulze had raised for Reinhold's Principle of Consciousness.

However, matters are, I contend, more complicated. Schelling's prefatory remarks emphasize the importance of Kant and downplay Fichte's significance. Schelling claims that he was led to the thoughts expressed in the *Form-Schrift* by studying the *Critique of Pure Reason* and that he then pondered them further "for some time" before the "most recent" publications brought them to mind again (AA 1.1: 265). Accordingly, Fichte is presented as important only insofar as the latter made it "easier" for him to penetrate more deeply into his own "preconceived ideas" (AA 1.1: 266). If these remarks are to be believed, they suggest that Schelling was primarily drawing out thoughts that he had already had in response to his initial study of Kant, and that Fichte's writings led Schelling to return to these issues, but did not fundamentally alter his original convictions.

Whatever credence one lends Schelling's autobiographical remarks, the specific way in which he argues for his first principle is both informative and striking. As we have seen, both Fichte and Schelling hold that the content and the form of the first principle of philosophy must mutually determine each other, and both also use the concept of the unconditioned to describe the absolutely first principle, but Schelling goes further in several crucial respects. First, Schelling explicitly claims that the first principle can be established only by way of "the criterion of absolute unconditionedness" (AA 1.1: 96). This is, he argues, the only criterion we can use to determine the first principle, since "all other criteria . . . would either contradict it or be already contained in it" (AA 1.1: 96). If one accepts Kant's argument that the concept of the conditioned leads, through conditioning relations, to the unconditioned, one will see that any first principle of the sort Schelling is interested in must be unconditioned. It is thus significant that Schelling explicitly claims that the only criterion that one could use to establish the first principle of philosophy is

that of being *absolutely unconditioned*; Fichte, by contrast, does not explicitly make such a claim at this point in his career.[16]

Second, Schelling explicitly characterizes the mutual determination of the form and content of the first principle in terms of the conditioned–unconditioned dichotomy: "an absolutely unconditioned content can have only an absolutely unconditioned form and vice versa since, if the one were conditioned, the other, even if it were intrinsically unconditioned, would have to be conditioned in its combination with a conditioned" (AA 1.1: 273). In other words, even if either the content or the form, considered in isolation, were unconditioned, combining it with a conditioned element in the first principle would, Schelling claims, form a composite both of whose members would thereby be conditioned.[17] Though Kant does not explicitly characterize any first principle of his philosophy in this way, it is plausible to see Schelling as taking the concepts of conditioned and unconditioned that Kant emphasized and extending their use to the context of first principles, one that would still be in the spirit of Kant.

Third, Schelling then develops explicit arguments for the content and the form of the first principle being unconditioned.[18] With respect to the *content*, he argues: an "absolutely, intrinsically *unconditioned* principle must have a *content* that is itself *unconditioned* . . . [This] is possible only insofar as that content is something that is originally absolutely posited, whose being posited is determined by nothing extrinsic to it, that therefore posits itself (through absolute causality)" (AA 1.1: 279). Schelling's idea is that since the content of the proposition (what the proposition is about) must be posited (i.e., the first proposition cannot lack content), and nothing external to it can posit it (since that would contradict its unconditioned status), there must be something that posits itself.[19]

Given that questions naturally arise about what such a self-positing being might be like, it is no surprise that Schelling immediately clarifies as follows:

[16] One might well wonder whether Fichte had such an argument in mind even if the texts do not develop it explicitly. If he did, Fichte's and Schelling's positions would coincide on this point, but even so, such an agreement would not decide the question of who actually influenced Schelling on this point.

[17] Schelling's claim could be true if conditioning relations are understood very broadly. I return to this point in §IV below.

[18] For a careful discussion of the different notions of form that Schelling uses in the *Form-Schrift*, see Henrich 2004: 1605–49.

[19] It is unfortunate that Schelling does not clarify here what positing is (whether it is epistemic or ontological), why it (rather than something else or nothing at all) is required, or how the positing of a content is consistent with that content being unconditioned (i.e., why the necessity of a content being posited does not condition that content), since without clarification of these issues, his argument is vulnerable on several fronts. It is also unfortunate since it makes more difficult the task of determining whether Kant or Fichte is influencing him on this particular point.

> Now nothing can be posited absolutely other than that through which everything else is first posited, nothing can posit itself other than what contains an absolutely independent, original self, and that is posited not because it *is posited*, but rather because it is itself the *positing*. This is nothing other than the *I* originally posited by itself [*das ursprünglich durch sich selbst gesetzte* Ich], which is described [*bezeichnet*] by all of the noted criteria. For the I is posited absolutely, its being posited is determined by nothing extrinsic to it, it posits itself (through absolute causality), it is posited, not because it is posited, but because it is itself the positing. (AA 1.1: 279)

Though Schelling does not canvass all of the possibilities one might consider and identify the I through a process of elimination, he does claim that we have a notion of the self as an active and independent being, endowed with absolute causality, which satisfies the criterion of being absolutely unconditioned. For though the I is posited, which raises the possibility that it might be conditioned (namely by whatever posits it), he argues that we can eliminate this possibility in this case on the grounds that since the self is posited by itself, it does not depend on anything external to itself, and thus is also not conditioned in the relevant sense.[20] The I, understood in this way, is thus the appropriate subject matter of the first fundamental principle of philosophy.

Though Schelling focuses on the unconditioned status of the I that posits itself, he also commits himself to the claim that the self-positing I also posits everything else. For as he remarks, this I is "that through which everything else is first posited." Though Schelling devotes little explicit attention in this passage to arguing that everything else truly depends on the self-positing I for its existence, he could be relying on Kant's idea that one can arrive at the unconditioned by starting with conditioned objects and moving to their conditions until one reaches the unconditioned, which reveals the basic dependence of conditioned objects on the unconditioned.[21]

Schelling's argument for the *form* of the first principle runs as follows:

> If the content of the highest principle justifies at the same time its form, but its form in turn justifies its content reciprocally, then the form must be given by nothing other than by the I and the I itself must be given only by

[20] A being that is conditioned only by itself can be said to be unconditioned just as a being that depends only on itself is still properly characterized as an independent being.

[21] It is unfortunate that Schelling does not focus more explicitly on the move from conditioned objects to the unconditioned, as Kant does. Instead, Schelling seems to take Kant's argument for granted and then focus on what the unconditioned is and what follows from it.

> the form. Now, the I alone is given as I, hence the first principle can only be *I am I* . . . Through this highest principle, namely, a form of absolute being-posited [*des absoluten Geseztseyns*] is given [and] . . . the universal expression of its form is A = A. (AA 1.1: 280)

That is, Schelling argues here that (a) the first principle must be "I am I" and (b) its form must be an identity expressible by "A = A," because (a) the content of the principle must be unconditioned (the I) and (b) its form must be derived from its content. Rather than arguing directly for the form of the first principle on the grounds that it must be unconditioned, Schelling takes an indirect route through the unconditioned content that he had already established. Given that the I is the content, the simplest possible forms are either a) "I = I" or b) "I ≠ I," but given the obvious truth of a) and the evident falsity of b), it is clear that "A = A" must express "the universal form of unconditioned being-posited [*unbedingten Gesetzseins*]" (AA 1.1: 281). Though this argument involves considerations pertaining to the conditioned and the unconditioned only indirectly (through the unconditioned content), it is plausible to take identity (as used in "A = A") to be an unconditioned form.[22] Schelling's somewhat circuitous route to this position thus does not call into question the fundamental role that the unconditioned plays in the form of the first principle.

Moreover, insofar as Schelling immediately goes on to derive a second principle, namely "not-I ≠ I," and claims that its form is unconditioned, it is clear that he continues to think through his position in terms of what is conditioned and what is unconditioned. In fact, Schelling proceeds to discuss a third (and final) first principle, whose form he describes as conditioned and whose content is unconditioned (albeit without explicitly stating what it is). In this way, he arrives at three fundamental principles, with the first, which is unconditioned in all respects, being the foundation of the other two, which are conditioned with respect to either their form or their content. Fichte similarly presented three fundamental principles in various versions of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, but these principles were not present as such prior to the *Form-Schrift*.[23] More importantly, however,

[22] What is much less clear is how to derive the content of the first principle from its form, namely the I from A = A.

[23] Fichte does explicitly mention three first principles in "Concerning the Concept of the *Wissenschaftslehre*" ["Über den Begriff der *Wissenschaftslehre*"] (Fichte SW 01: 49–50) and he even uses the conditioned–unconditioned framework to express the logical relations between these principles, but he invokes these principles not as his own first principles, but rather as part of an argument against the possibility that there could be more than one absolutely first principle (since

Schelling's *arguments* for what he identifies as the first principle of philosophy appeal to the conditioned and the unconditioned, whereas Fichte simply asserts these descriptions without any explicit argument.[24]

What we thus find in the *Form-Schrift* overall is that Schelling is deeply influenced by Kant and his specific views of the conditioned and unconditioned. First, like Kant, Schelling is interested in an unconditioned first principle from which all other cognition would follow (ideally, in systematic and thus scientific form). While other thinkers at the time were also interested in discovering a first principle, Schelling's explicit interest both in that principle being unconditioned and in arguing that it must be unconditioned, clearly derives from Kant.[25] This is true even as Schelling goes on to make (what from Kant's perspective must appear to be) creative use of the terms in which Kant's argument is articulated. Second, like Kant, Schelling is explicitly committed to the existence of an unconditioned, self-positing, independent being that acts with absolute causality

any other principle could be absolute only in some respect, given that it would have to be conditioned by the absolutely first principle).

[24] Henrich 2004: 1656, 1594 similarly thinks that Schelling is not following Fichte in his use of the conditioned–unconditioned pair.

[25] As noted above, Horstmann and Sandkaulen-Bock both maintain that Schelling derives this argument from Jacobi. While Horstmann rightly notes that Jacobi is committed to the unconditioned as a presupposition of the mechanistic explanation of natural events, he does not consider that Kant's notion of reason is also committed to the unconditioned as a presupposition of conditioned objects in the world and thus does not explicitly take a stand on whether Kant could have influenced Schelling on this point. Not only do we know for a fact that Schelling read Kant intensively (where it is a matter of some conjecture as to how familiar Schelling was with Jacobi's texts [Horstmann 2000: 139]), but there is also an important difference between Kant's and Jacobi's versions of the argument. Whereas Jacobi accepts the unconditioned as an object of (non-rational) faith, which one would be immediately acquainted with, Kant's argument bases its commitment to the unconditioned on an inference from conditioned objects and his distinctive conception of reason. That Schelling places the unconditioned at the foundation of his entire system of science suggests that his position is based on reason rather than revelation and, as a result, on Kant's argument rather than Jacobi's. Indeed, as Horstmann points out (Horstmann 1991: 58), at the end of the *Ich-Schrift*, Schelling explicitly claims that Kant was the first to establish mediately rather than immediately the absolute I as the final substrate of all being (AA 1.2: 162). Sandkaulen-Bock claims that Schelling's project differs from Jacobi's (insofar as she speaks of his "Verschränkung des Jacobi'schen Unbedingten" [Sandkaulen-Bock 1990: 18]) at the same time that it derives from it. She argues for this claim on the grounds that it is precisely the points of contrast with Jacobi that lead to unique difficulties ("Aporien" or "eigentlichen Schwierigkeiten" [Sandkaulen-Bock 1990: 37, 44–52, 63–5]) in Schelling's position, difficulties that he then attempts to respond to throughout the 1790s and beyond. But it is awkward to claim that Schelling departs from Jacobi precisely on the points on which he is supposed to derive from him. Moreover, it is relevant to note that Sandkaulen-Bock 1990: 35 interprets Kant such that the unconditioned is irretrievably [*uneinholbar*] inaccessible to discursive thought. Given such an interpretation, Schelling would not be able to draw on Kant's position. However, as we have seen above, Kant does not hold that we cannot think the unconditioned, which makes it possible that he could in fact be an important influence for Schelling.

and that is required for the existence of all conditioned things (even if Kant qualifies this commitment significantly). Third, it is true that Schelling draws a distinction between the form and content of the first principle and argues that both must be unconditioned in a way that one cannot find in Kant (unless one identifies the form and content with the logical and real uses of reason), but these differences reflect a deeper kind of Kantian influence, for what Schelling is doing is taking the kind of conditioning relation that Kant had emphasized and attempting to establish not only that the first principle is unconditioned, but also that its essential components are unconditioned as a way of ensuring the unconditioned status of the principle that has such a form and content. Thus, even if Schelling goes beyond the letter of Kant's position on this point, it is still accurate to say that he is attempting to identify the fundamental spirit of Kant's philosophy by establishing the fullest possible sense in which the first principle of philosophy is unconditioned. Kant's influence on Schelling's position and argument in the *Form-Schrift* is thus specific, extensive, and fundamental.[26]

III Developments in the *Ich-Schrift*

Little time passes between the publication of the *Form-Schrift*, on September 9, 1794, and that of the *Ich-Schrift*, on March 29, 1795, so it is no surprise that the *Ich-Schrift* reveals Schelling committed to the same kind of project already begun in the *Form-Schrift*, even in the face of significant differences. To see what novel contributions the *Ich-Schrift* makes to that project and how Kant might still be relevant to understanding his position, it is useful to keep the overall argument of that work in mind. Schelling begins (§1) by arguing that unconditioned knowledge presupposes an unconditioned being and, more generally, that the principle of thought must coincide with the principle of being. He then argues (§2) that the unconditioned being can be neither an object (or thing) nor a subject,[27] and therefore must be an absolute I (§3). Though Schelling concedes that the existence of the absolute I cannot be objectively proved (since that would render it an object and thus conditioned), he argues that it must

[26] My contention is thus that there is a core set of concepts and principles involving the unconditioned that Schelling derives from Kant (even as he uses it to somewhat un-Kantian ends), and that Schelling draws on Fichte to articulate a certain kind of formal philosophical structure within which the core concepts and principles are embedded.

[27] Schelling also supports this claim by maintaining that an object cannot be the source of its own reality, that is, cannot be a self-positing being.

satisfy the criterion of being unconditioned, since "I cannot think myself under the condition of my being [*Seyn*] without thinking of myself as already existing [*Seyn*]" (AA 1.2: 90).[28] In short, in the case of "I think," existence is presupposed by, and thus is a condition of, thought rather than a consequence of it, which would therefore be conditioned by it. Given this foundation, Schelling lays out and discusses all possible systems of the unconditioned (in §§4–6): perfect and imperfect dogmatism and criticism [*Kritizismus*]. He then deduces (§7) the original form [*Urform*] of the I and of the highest principle, namely identity, as well as (§8) the form of its being posited through absolute freedom in intellectual intuition. He concludes (§§9–15) by arguing that the absolute I must be singular (since a plurality of Is would require a principle of individuation that would condition what is supposed to be unconditioned) and by deriving first what he calls the subordinate forms of the I, namely Kant's categories (starting with the categories of quantity and then proceeding to those of quality, relation, and modality), and then the subordinate forms of positing, where the categories of modality are applied not only to the primitive concepts of being [*Seyn*], non-being, and existence [*Daseyn*], but also to the finite I in both practical and theoretical respects.

What this outline makes clear is that in the *Ich-Schrift* Schelling is moving the project initiated in the *Form-Schrift* forward in several important respects, beyond simply adding detail to the overall project. First, in distinguishing between the unconditioned in knowledge and the unconditioned in being and then in arguing that the two must coincide, Schelling is adding complexity to the position expressed in the *Form-Schrift*, which did not invoke such a distinction and thus could not contain an argument establishing their coincidence. The basic idea behind his argument seems to be that one could not have *unconditioned* knowledge of a *conditioned* being because if our knowledge were of something conditioned, then the inference from the condition to the conditioned that it conditions would render the knowledge of the conditioned itself conditioned rather than unconditioned.[29] As a result, if there is to be unconditioned knowledge, it must be of something unconditioned. In short, Schelling is attempting to exploit the complex inferential relations that obtain between conditioned, conditions, and unconditioned, which Kant had made prominent, so as to

[28] "The I alone is nothing, is not itself thinkable, without its being at the same time being posited, for it is not at all thinkable except for insofar as it thinks itself, i.e., insofar as it is" (AA 1.2: 91). Schelling packs much into this claim, which deserves fuller discussion than is possible here.

[29] The most explicit argument in the text is at AA 1.2: 86. For Schelling's claim to go through, he would also need to establish that we could not have conditioned cognition of the unconditioned.

establish an important correspondence between our fundamental representations and reality.

Another major advance in the *Ich-Schrift* over the *Form-Schrift* is that Schelling places significant new limits on what we can cognize of the unconditioned being that is posited according to the fundamental principle, by arguing that the unconditioned can be neither an object (a thing) nor a subject. Though he plays on the linguistic similarities between thing [*Ding*] and condition [*bedingen*] such that every thing [*Ding*] must be conditioned [*bedingt*] to be a thing at all, he also makes it clear that his position does not depend essentially on such contingent linguistic facts.[30] His basic argument is rather that because every subject depends on an object and every object depends on a subject, neither one can be unconditioned. One formulation of Schelling's argument runs as follows: "because the subject is conceivable only with respect to an object, [but] the object is conceivable only with respect to the subject, neither one of the two can contain the unconditioned: for both are reciprocally conditioned by each other" (AA 1.2: 88). Again, that Schelling uses conditioning relations to characterize the relations between subject and object reflects Kant's continued influence, though we return below to the way in which Schelling modifies the content and scope of the condition relations.

At the same time, this "advance" puts Schelling in a somewhat difficult situation. For if the unconditioned being, or absolute I, cannot be either an object or a subject, it is not immediately clear what exactly it could be and what we could say about it positively (beyond whatever follows immediately from characterizing it negatively as an independent being). That it posits itself by way of an unconditioned causality, or that it is an "unconditioned positing of all reality in itself through absolute self-power [*Selbstmacht*]" (AA 1.2: 104), which he now also calls absolute freedom, is an immediate consequence of its being unconditioned, but does not add any positive content.[31] In fact, Schelling goes even further by arguing that the absolute I cannot be represented by *any* concept (AA 1.2: 106). As a result, Schelling is forced into holding that the absolute I can be determined only in intellectual intuition, since that employs no concepts and has no object. He immediately acknowledges that Kant denies that we can have intellectual intuition, but then claims that Kant does so in the context

[30] See the first paragraph of §3 (AA 1.2: 89), which refers to "the philosophical formation of languages" and suggests that some might be closer to "the original" languages than others.

[31] For discussion of Schelling's conception of freedom, see Fukaya 2006 and especially Kosch 2006a: 66–86 who considers the transition from his earlier to his later conceptions of freedom and the role of his *Naturphilosophie* in that transition.

of "an investigation that only presupposes the absolute I everywhere, and determines the empirically conditioned I only with previously assumed higher principles" (AA 1.2: 106). That is, Schelling interprets Kant (correctly) as denying that human beings could have intellectual intuition, but as accepting the broader assumption of a supersensible ground that would have that kind of intuition.[32]

Moreover, this "advance" reveals that Schelling's project is fundamentally different from Reinhold's and Fichte's.[33] Whereas it is essential to Reinhold's and Fichte's projects that their first principles were capable of universal validity and absolute certainty, Schelling's denial that we can form a concept of the absolute I as either an object or a subject clearly removes it from the class of things that could be known in this way. It may be that whatever being can have intellectual intuition might have absolute certainty about its existence, but it is clear that we are not such beings and that such knowledge is closed off to us.[34] As a result, Schelling's project is most naturally understood not as an attempt at foundationalist epistemology as Reinhold's and Fichte's are, but rather as one that is essentially metaphysical, since he is investigating what must be the self-positing condition of both itself and everything else.[35] Though Schelling does not explicitly characterize his project as investigating the demands of reason, his investigation of conditions and his search for the unconditioned reflects an essential aim of reason.

Whereas Schelling's *Form-Schrift* reveals Kant's influence in relatively straightforward ways, we can see that he is still indebted to Kant in the *Ich-Schrift*, albeit in ways that are, at times, more complex, given that he is becoming more independent and creative in the development of his views. On the one hand, we continue to see important similarities on fundamental points. Like Kant, Schelling now distinguishes clearly between epistemological and metaphysical conditioning relations (even if Schelling does not explicitly refer to the logical or real use of reason, as Kant does). Like Kant, Schelling places significant limits on what we can know about any unconditioned being, as both emphasize that we cannot *objectively* prove

[32] In this chapter I must abstract from the interesting complications that arise for Schelling's epistemological views as a result of his acceptance of intellectual intuition (which would require clarification of whether he is drawing on Fichte's remarks in his *Aenesidemus* review).

[33] See note 2 above.

[34] It is true that Schelling says very little about the kind of cognition that empirical subjects might be able to have and how that relates to the kind of intellectual intuition he posits. However, it is, to my mind, most natural to read Schelling as asserting that intellectual intuition is a presupposition of normal human conscious awareness rather than a description of it.

[35] Whether Fichte is and remains a foundationalist throughout the *Wissenschaftslehre* is a difficult controversial topic that cannot be clarified in the present context.

the existence of the unconditioned and also do not have cognition of its positive features, which must therefore make the unconditioned very much unlike the conditioned objects we experience in space and time. Like Kant, Schelling recognizes that even if we cannot have knowledge (or cognition) of the unconditioned, it is nonetheless necessary that there be some way of representing it, with Schelling appealing to Kant's notion of an intellectual intuition to this end. Like Kant, Schelling holds that the categories can be derived from a single principle, and he then goes on to provide just such a derivation, in the hopes of carrying Kant's project out to completion in this respect.[36] Thus, as Schelling thinks through his position more fully, he comes to appreciate, and develop further, some of the most important features of Kant's position regarding the unconditioned that were not present, or at least not readily apparent, in the *Form-Schrift*.

On the other hand, it is striking that Schelling departs from Kant on fundamental points. Unlike Kant, who holds that the limits to our epistemological capacities restrict what we can know of the metaphysical conditioning relations that obtain in the world (while still allowing our ideas of these metaphysical relations to be used as regulative principles), Schelling denies the regulative status of such principles and argues that the epistemological and metaphysical conditioning relations must coincide. Unlike Kant, who often seems agnostic about the positive nature of the unconditioned in objective theoretical contexts, Schelling argues that the unconditioned, as an absolute I, must be mental and a singular unity (though it remains unclear what sort of mind the absolute I is). Unlike Kant, who thinks that we can at least represent (even if not cognize) God as an *ens realissimum*, Schelling denies that our concepts can represent an unconditioned being at all, suggesting instead that intellectual intuition can accomplish this task.[37]

IV Analysis and evaluation

Now that we have seen how Kant's views on the unconditioned exerted a significant influence on Schelling's early project and its development in 1794–5, we are in a position to engage in a closer analysis and evaluation of two crucial aspects of that project. The first point concerns the argument

[36] This similarity belies an important difference in the kind of derivation that Kant and Schelling hold to be possible.

[37] Unfortunately, Schelling does not take a stand on how the kind of intellectual intuition to which he is committed would relate to Kant's notion of belief. Schelling also does not seem to notice Kant's distinction between cognition and knowledge.

that Schelling develops for the existence of an unconditioned, self-positing being. Dieter Henrich, one of the leading scholars of the period, takes an extremely critical stance towards the argument. He first criticizes Schelling's fundamental principle in the *Form-Schrift* for "sliding from a propositional sense of the expression 'unconditioned' to an ontological sense."[38] This criticism may be accurate for Schelling's position in the *Form-Schrift*, since he does not clearly distinguish epistemic and ontological conditions (as Kant does with the logical and real uses of reason). However, in the *Ich-Schrift* Schelling distinguishes these two senses, argues for a connection between them, and is thus responsive to precisely this point.

The following series of objections that Henrich raises is, however, more serious:

> Several expressions are immediately offered as determinations of the meaning of "unconditioned": The content must be "originally absolutely posited." It can be determined by "nothing external to it," which leads to the assumption that it "posits itself (through absolute causality)." Since nothing can "be absolutely posited" in this way "other than that through which everything else is posited," it must contain "an absolutely independent, original self" that is posited "because it is itself the positing."
>
> In this breathtaking sequence of steps – all of them [*allesamt*] in the modus of a non sequitur – the entrance of the *I* as the principle of philosophy is prepared and probably also nearly coerced. Schelling proceeds from unconditionedness as independence of prior conditions to self-conditioning, further, to the condition of everything, and from there to the primordiality of a self that conditions everything.[39]

Henrich is undoubtedly correct that much is packed into the argument that leads to the existence of the self-positing I in Schelling's first principle, and also that Schelling does not always present his argument as cleanly and neatly as he might. However, the charge that Schelling's argument engages in a series of breathtaking non sequiturs deserves closer scrutiny. To this end, it is useful to divide the argument into three steps.

The first step concerns the move from the existence of conditioned objects to that of something unconditioned. Schelling is relying on a three-part argument that Kant was the first to develop. The first part moves from the existence of a conditioned object to the existence of its conditions, and rests on an analytic truth (there must be a condition for there to be a conditioned object). The second part proceeds from the existence of its conditions to that of the totality of its conditions. It is based on the idea

[38] Henrich 2004: 1635. [39] Henrich 2004: 1635–6.

that for sufficient conditions to be truly sufficient, they must include all of the sufficient conditions of the existence of the conditioned object, including the sufficient conditions for the sufficient conditions for a conditioned object. The third part then moves from the existence of the totality of its conditions to the unconditioned, and it too is based on an analytic connection between the concepts "totality of conditions" and "unconditioned." Schelling is best understood as accepting the conclusion of Kant's argument and then arguing further that an unconditioned being must be independent and posited absolutely, i.e., without conditions, since that follows trivially from it being unconditioned.[40] If there is some non sequitur embedded in this step of the argument, it is a rather subtle one that is so well disguised that Kant is just as guilty of it as Schelling is.

The second step in Schelling's argument moves from the existence of something unconditioned to it being a self-positing being. Given that the unconditioned being is unconditioned, it is immediately clear that nothing distinct from it could be the cause of its existence, since the causation of one thing by another thing is a kind of conditioning relation and is thus ruled out by its unconditioned status. As a result, either this being causes itself or it has no cause of its existence. While Kant rejects as incoherent the idea that something could cause itself, Schelling accepts it, presumably on the grounds that there must be some reason for the existence of the unconditioned thing.[41] It is worth noting here that the language of positing that Schelling uses to express this point is not essential to his position, since it indicates nothing more than a certain kind of causality, and thus does not involve any non sequitur.

Henrich is right to note that the unconditioned status of the self-positing being is distinct from it serving as a condition of everything else, which represents a third step in Schelling's overall argument. However, as we have seen above, if one is led to the existence of the unconditioned by starting with the existence of the conditioned objects that we encounter everywhere in the world (as Kant does), then one can make a case that the unconditioned being must be the condition of everything conditioned. For

[40] There are important differences between Kant and Schelling with respect to this argument. One crucial difference is that Kant devotes his attention primarily to inferring from what is conditioned to its conditions in the (unfulfilled) hopes of attaining (cognition of) the unconditioned, whereas Schelling simply takes the conclusion of the argument for granted and focuses primarily on what features the unconditioned must have.

[41] See Watkins (forthcoming) for discussion of Kant's reasons for rejecting this idea. His basic point is that a cause must be (ontologically, if not also temporally) prior to its effect, but it is impossible for something to be prior to itself.

if every object is conditioned by a subject and vice versa and everything finite must be either an object or a subject, then everything finite must be conditioned, and it stands to reason that they are all ultimately conditioned by the one unconditioned being. Thus, even if Schelling does not explicitly articulate such an argument, he does provide the requisite materials for it.[42] Given the defensibility of these steps, it is far from clear that Henrich's negative evaluation of Schelling's argument is justified.

A second aspect of Schelling's position that deserves closer attention concerns two subtle shifts in his understanding of the content of conditioning relations as compared with that of Kant. First, it is unfortunate that, like Kant, Schelling never defines exactly what a condition is, since the absence of an explicit definition makes it difficult to determine its exact content and domain. What's more, Schelling seems, at times, to think that quite a broad range of relations will condition the relevant relata. For example, when Schelling asserts that every object is conditioned by a subject and vice versa, his justification is based on the claim that the conception of the object is related to the conception of a subject (and vice versa). However, the idea that this kind of symmetrical conceptual relation should count as a kind of conditioning relation would seem to represent a significant broadening in the content of what counts as an instance of conditioning. Moreover, this shift in content makes a crucial difference to Schelling's overall philosophy insofar as this shift makes it easier to establish conditioning relations and thus easier to arrive at a Spinozistic position.[43]

Second, it is quite striking that Schelling does not distinguish any of the different kinds of real conditioning relations that Kant had noted, such as causal, compositional, and modal dependencies. Instead, Schelling employs a more generic notion of conditioning and seems to move, by way of that generic notion, from, e.g., the determinacy or finitude of finite objects to their being conditioned and from there to the unconditioned, without considering what kind of conditioning relation obtains in each case.[44] One might think that insofar as Schelling is interested in identifying the first fundamental principle that describes something metaphysically prior

[42] It is also striking how little of what is said in the *Form-Schrift* and the *Ich-Schrift* actually depends on Schelling's claim that the self-positing being posits all else such that even if Schelling were guilty of a non sequitur on this point, it would not be an especially serious problem for his larger project.

[43] I do not take a stand here on whether or not his acceptance of a broader notion of conditioning relations led him to accept Spinozism.

[44] This observation is consistent with, but more specific than, Horstmann's point that Schelling amalgamates the results of Kant's three *Critiques* such that the end product allows no recourse to the specific contexts in which they arose (Horstmann 1991: 59, 161).

to all else, the different kinds of conditioning relations are of no consequence. The important point is simply that one is in a position to infer the existence of the unconditioned.

However, such "short arguments" to the unconditioned, as attractive as they may seem in principle, run the risk of overlooking important possibilities. It could turn out that not all series of conditioning relations necessarily lead back to a single unconditioned being, as Schelling supposes.[45] Perhaps there are several different unconditioned causes of a given state of affairs rather than a single cause. Or, more interestingly, if one distinguishes between different kinds of real conditioning relations, it is possible that an object that currently exists in the world is conditioned causally by an unconditioned being that exists distinct from it while also being conditioned compositionally by the parts that compose it. Or, perhaps my *acting* as a free and unconditioned cause of a series of events is distinct from and consistent with my *existence* being caused and thus conditioned by God.[46] Not only does this last possibility reflect a genuine metaphysical possibility, but one might also have moral grounds for believing that this actually obtains in our own cases. As a result, Schelling's use of a generic notion of conditioning and the failure to distinguish different kinds of conditioning relations conceal philosophically important issues that would, as it happens, affect later developments in German Idealism as well.

V Conclusion

Though Schelling is undoubtedly intensely focused on a wide range of post-Kantian figures in the early stages of his philosophical career, I have argued that he is also influenced by Kant's views on the unconditioned in ways that are both specific and fundamental to his overall project. This is not to say that Schelling displays no independence with respect to how he employs his conception of the conditioning relation. Quite the contrary, part of what explains the distinctiveness of his position is the novel ways in which he employs the concepts of the conditioned, its conditions, and, most importantly, the unconditioned. Indeed, it is an important and relatively overlooked part of the story of German Idealism that these Kantian influences continue into Schelling's mature thought and beyond.[47]

[45] Kosch 2006a: 70 notes this weakness in Schelling's position.
[46] For extended discussion of this possibility, see Brewer and Watkins 2012.
[47] I thank Karl Ameriks, Michelle Kosch, James Messina, Lara Ostaric, Peter Thielke, and Clinton Tolley for helpful comments on an earlier version of this chapter.

CHAPTER 2

Schelling and skepticism

Michael N. Forster

In the Introduction to the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), where he is mainly concerned with epistemological questions in general and with skepticism in particular, Hegel seems to accuse his former friend and collaborator Schelling of dogmatism in his counterintuitive monistic philosophy and of a consequent vulnerability to skepticism: "When confronted with a knowledge that is without truth, science can [not] merely reject it as an ordinary way of looking at things, while assuring us that its science is a quite different sort of cognition for which that ordinary knowledge is of no account whatever . . . By [this] assurance, science would be declaring its power to lie simply in its being; but the untrue knowledge likewise appeals to the fact that it is, and assures us that for it science is of no account. One bare assurance is worth just as much as another."[1] (The last sentence here alludes to the ancient Pyrrhonian skeptics' fourth trope of Agrippa, which maintains that against a bald presupposition a contrary bald presupposition may be advanced with equal right.) Hegel gives a similar account of Schelling's philosophy as dogmatic later in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*.[2]

Is Hegel's characterization right? It seems to me that it *does* apply to certain phases of Schelling's career, especially to the period when Hegel first came to Jena to collaborate with Schelling, i.e., roughly 1801–2. Thus Schelling's *Presentation of My System of Philosophy* [*Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie*] (1801) shows no real interest in skepticism, and instead presents its highest principle of absolute identity in a dogmatic way as a principle that stands in no need of demonstration (SW 1.4: 116–17). And he still holds a similar position in parts of *Further Presentations from the System of Philosophy* [*Fernere Darstellungen aus dem System der Philosophie*] (1802). For example, he writes there:

[1] Hegel 1977a: 48–9. [2] Hegel 1974: 3:525ff.

> For the philosopher . . . intellectual . . . intuition is something decided and concerning which no doubt is permitted or explanation found necessary. It is what is simply and without any demand presupposed . . . That it is not something that can be taught is clear; all attempts to teach it are therefore quite useless in scientific philosophy and ways of leading to it . . . cannot be looked for in strict science. Nor is it intelligible why philosophy is exactly bound to be especially considerate of incompetence, it is rather appropriate to cut off the approach to philosophy abruptly and to isolate it from common cognition in all directions in such a way that no path or pavement can lead from common cognition to philosophy. Here begins philosophy, and whoever is not already there or hesitates before this point, let him keep his distance or flee back. (SW 1.4: 361–2)[3]

However, it seems to me that Hegel's characterization does not really apply to Schelling's career as a whole. On the contrary, both before and after the brief period at the start of their collaboration in Jena just referred to, Schelling was in fact quite concerned about skepticism and about casting his philosophy in a way that would take it into account and cope with it.

Schelling's precise ways of thinking about skepticism and about its relation to philosophy went through several rather dramatic shifts over the course of his career, however. I would therefore like in this chapter to try to distinguish and sketch three different positions that he adopted on this subject at different periods. The first of these is a Fichte-inspired position, which he held during the period 1794–1800; the second a Hegel-inspired position, which he held briefly in 1802–3; the third a Romanticism-inspired position, which he adopted around 1821.

I The Fichte-inspired position (1794–1800)

Schelling's first, Fichte-inspired position concerning skepticism and its relation to philosophy is the best known of the three.[4] This position endured, with only relatively minor variations, all the way from Schelling's early work *On the Possibility of a Form of Philosophy in General* [*Ueber die Möglichkeit einer Form der Philosophie überhaupt*] (1794), through such subsequent works as *Of the I as the Principle of Philosophy or on the Unconditional in Human Knowledge* [*Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie oder über das Unbedingte im menschlichen Wissen*] (1795) and *Essays in Clarification of the Idealism of the Wissenschaftslehre* [*Abhandlungen zur*

[3] All translations from Schelling's works in this chapter are my own.
[4] For example, this position is discussed by Frank 1985, Horstmann 2000, and Beiser 2002.

Erläuterung des Idealismus der Wissenschaftslehre] (1796–7), to his *System of Transcendental Idealism* [*System des transzendentalen Idealismus*] (1800).

It will be helpful here to begin by rehearsing a little of the history of German philosophy that immediately preceded the works in question. Kant's critical philosophy was widely and plausibly seen as itself skeptical in certain ways, especially concerning knowledge of God. But in other ways it had also obviously aspired to *answer* skepticism – including Humean skepticism concerning causation, Pyrrhonian skepticism (in the manner of the Antinomies), and external-world skepticism (of the sort addressed by the Fourth Paralogism and the Refutation of Idealism).[5] In the next generation, the main champion of the critical philosophy, Reinhold, had sought to reinforce this anti-skeptical project against residual skeptical threats by recasting the critical philosophy in a particular way: namely, by finding a certain first principle from which the rest of the critical philosophy could be deduced with certainty. The first principle that Reinhold had identified was roughly Kant's principle of the "transcendental unity of apperception," which Reinhold reconceived as one's own self-consciousness and especially as a "principle of consciousness" that spelled out its essential structure. In 1792 skepticism had then fought back when Schulze published his *Aenesidemus, or Concerning the Foundations of the Elementary Philosophy Propounded in Jena by Professor Reinhold, Including a Defense of Skepticism against the Pretensions of the Critique of Reason*. Schulze's skeptical worries about Kant's own version of the critical philosophy largely concerned the (alleged) untenability of Kant's doctrine of the thing in itself and Kant's failure to derive the rest of his system with certainty. Against Reinhold, Schulze again complained about the doctrine of the thing in itself, and he in addition raised various objections against Reinhold's supposedly certain "principle of consciousness." Fichte had then responded to Schulze in his "*Aenesidemus* Review" of 1794, in which he had basically endorsed Reinhold's project of attempting to reinforce the critical philosophy by founding it on, and deducing it from, a single certain first principle, and had even endorsed Reinhold's focus in this connection on self-consciousness and the "principle of consciousness," but had also attempted to answer Schulze's objections to Kant and Reinhold by (a) jettisoning the doctrine of the thing in itself (as, according to Fichte, not even genuinely Kantian) and (b) deriving one's self-consciousness and the "principle of consciousness" from a (supposedly) more fundamental and certain principle, namely the *self's act of self-positing*, from which,

[5] For a detailed account of this, see Forster 2008.

according to Fichte, one's self-consciousness, the "principle of consciousness," and the rest of the Kantian system could be derived with certainty. Fichte had already in his "*Aenesidemus* Review" called the self's act of self-positing through which the self (allegedly) comes to self-consciousness "intellectual intuition" – in reflection of Kant's conception that "intellectual intuition" would be a type of cognition that actively created its own object and that thereby possessed a sort of immediacy in its cognitive relation to the object that forestalled epistemological problems. After writing the "*Aenesidemus* Review," Fichte had then gone on to develop most of these ideas more elaborately in further work, beginning with *On the Concept of the Wissenschaftslehre, or so-called Philosophy* (1794).[6]

Now the very first pages of Schelling's *On the Possibility* from 1794 show clearly that the early Schelling first arrived at a broad agreement with Fichte's subjective idealism largely by taking seriously skeptical challenges of the sort that Reinhold had raised against Kant's critical philosophy in its original form and of the sort that "Aenesidemus" Schulze had raised not only against the critical philosophy in its original form, but also against Reinhold's revised version of it, and by coming to sympathize with what he saw as Reinhold's partial and especially Fichte's fuller solutions to such skeptical challenges against the critical philosophy. Thus, Schelling opens *On the Possibility* by identifying Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and skeptical worries in the spirit of Reinhold concerning its lack of a single certain first principle from which the rest of it could be derived with certainty as the starting-point for his own philosophical reflections:

> The thoughts that are expounded in the present treatise were, after the author had already carried them around with him for some time, brought back to life in him by the most recent publications in the world of philosophy. He was already brought to them through studying the *Critique of Pure Reason* itself, in which nothing seemed to him more obscure and difficult than the attempt to ground a form of all philosophy without anywhere setting up a principle through which not only the original form that lies at the basis of all individual forms, but also its necessary connection with the individual forms dependent upon it would be established. (SW 1.1: 87)

Schelling then identifies Schulze's versions of such skeptical worries as a further contribution to his own intellectual development:

[6] For a fuller and excellent account of these developments, see Breazeale 1981 and 1982.

> This omission became all the more striking for him [i.e., for the author, Schelling] through the constant attacks of the opponents of the Kantian philosophy, which were most commonly directed against precisely this side of it, especially the attacks of *Aenesidemus* [i.e., Schulze], who had perhaps seen deeper than most others into this omission of an establishing principle and of a reliable connection in the Kantian deductions, insofar as they concern the form of philosophy in general. (SW 1.1: 87)

Schelling then implies that Schulze's specific versions of such skeptical worries have also shown Reinhold's attempt to address such worries to be inadequate:

> The author soon thought he had discovered that precisely those objections of this skeptic which related indirectly or immediately to this omission were the most important and so far least answerable: he became convinced that even the theory of the faculty of representation that *Reinhold* had so far given had not yet secured itself against them, but that it would necessarily in the end lead to a philosophy that, grounded on deeper foundations, would no longer be assailed by these objections of the new skeptic. For Reinhold's Philosophy of Elements was in the first instance only meant to answer one of the two questions that must precede any science and whose separation from each other has done extraordinary damage to philosophy up to this point – namely, the question how a philosophy's *content* is possible – while it on the whole only answered the question concerning the possibility of a philosophy's form in the same way as it had already been answered by the *Critique of Pure Reason*, i.e. without the investigation being led back to a final principle of all form. But of course if the *whole* problem concerning the possibility of a scientific philosophy was not solved, the part of it with whose solution the theory of the faculty of representation had occupied itself could also not be solved in such a way that all demands concerning it were satisfied. (SW 1.1: 87–8)

Then, finally, Schelling endorses the (in his opinion) more satisfactory version of a defense of Kant's position against all such skeptical worries that Fichte has developed in his "*Aenesidemus* Review" and in *On the Concept of the Wissenschaftslehre, or so-called Philosophy*:

> The author of this treatise was now reinforced in this judgment concerning what the theory of the faculty of representation had left undone for the future development of the Philosophy of Elements most strongly by the latest work of Herr Professor Fichte [*On the Concept of the Wissenschaftslehre, or so-called Philosophy* (1794)], which surprised him all the more pleasantly to the extent that with these previously developed thoughts it was easier for him to penetrate into the deep course of that investigation, if not wholly then perhaps more than he would have been able to otherwise, and to pursue its goal of finally achieving a dissolution of the *whole* problem

> *concerning the possibility of philosophy in general*, as a subject with which he had already become somewhat familiar in advance. It was this work that first made him decide on a fuller development of his thoughts concerning that problem and he found this effort richly rewarded by the fact that that work became more intelligible to him precisely to the extent that he had previously developed these thoughts more definitely. Just the same advantage was made possible for him by the excellent review of Aenesidemus in the *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung*, whose author is unmistakable [i.e., Fichte, author of the "*Aenesidemus* Review"]. (SW 1.1: 88–9)[7]

Schelling subsequently elaborated on this endorsement of Fichte's anti-skeptical project in later works from the 1790s. For example, in *Essays in Clarification* from 1796–7, he in a Fichtean spirit diagnosed skepticism as the result of philosophically distinguishing between representation and thing in itself, arguing instead for an (allegedly commonsense) *equation* of thing and representation (SW 1.1: 361–2, 378). And already in *Of the I* and *Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism* [*Philosophische Briefe über Dogmatismus und Kriticismus*] from 1795 he began using the expression "intellectual intuition" to refer to the self's act of self-positing and the self-consciousness that it grounds, just as Fichte had already done (SW 1.1: 181, 317ff.).

Indeed, this whole fundamentally Fichtean position on skepticism and philosophy still survives in Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* from 1800. For there, in a similar vein, he explicitly holds that Transcendental Philosophy begins with a thoroughgoing skepticism, a general doubt as to the reality of the objective (SW 1.3: 343), and insists that Transcendental Philosophy must have a first principle that is certain and that grounds the certainty of all the rest of it (SW 1.3: 346, 362–3). He again equates this first principle with the self's act of self-positing and resulting self-consciousness, or with an "intellectual intuition" (SW 1.3: 365–9).[8] And he also again undertakes to explain away the thing in itself as a sort of illusion grounded in the self (SW 1.3: 417ff.).[9]

[7] Schelling is, of course, attempting in these passages to preserve an impression of a certain autonomy or even priority in his pursuit of his predecessors' line of thought. But this is presumably to a large extent just intellectual vanity and to be taken with a grain of salt.

[8] The philosophy of nature that Schelling had been developing in the meantime does not fundamentally affect this theory, since for Schelling nature is implicitly one with the self.

[9] I think that Manfred Frank in Frank 1985 exaggerates the extent of Schelling's differences from, and originality in comparison with, Fichte during the whole period just discussed. For example, Frank depicts Schelling's conception that the self's self-positing is an "intellectual intuition" as an original insight (41–7), but he thereby overlooks the fact that Fichte had already had exactly this conception in his "*Aenesidemus* Review." Nor is it at all clear to me that *Jacobi* played the sort of major role alongside Fichte in forming the early Schelling's position that Rolf-Peter Horstmann attributes to him in Horstmann 2000.

The Kant–Reinhold–Fichte–Schelling project just discussed is strikingly continuous with Descartes' project (more continuous, indeed, than most of its representatives would have cared to acknowledge). In particular, the ideas that philosophy begins with and needs to address skepticism, that it must indeed achieve certain knowledge, and above all that the primary case and the foundation of such knowledge lies in the first-person psychological perspective of the subject are all recognizably Cartesian in inspiration.

Many philosophers still find such a Cartesian approach attractive even today. However, one may reasonably have misgivings about it. Descartes' own "cogito" argument is notoriously vulnerable to serious philosophical objections, most famously concerning its inference from "I think" to "I am," but even concerning its very premise "I think." Moreover, the Fichtean strategy of moving from one's self-consciousness, or the "I think," to its allegedly deeper ground in the self's act of self-positing courts philosophical objections similar to those that the original Cartesian inference from "I think" to "I am" had courted – a problem which, if anything, is exacerbated by Schelling, who emphasizes even more emphatically than Fichte himself that the self-positing self in question is not the empirical self but an "absolute self." While the notion that the self affords an island of certain knowledge has become stubbornly ingrained in much modern European philosophy, it is salutary to remind oneself of these sorts of problems and also of the fact that there have been other cultural traditions and schools of thought, such as Buddhism and psychoanalysis, which have plausibly taken precisely the opposite view, namely that the self and its first-person psychological perspective are a paradigmatic area of *illusions*.

II The Hegel-inspired position (1802–3)

In part for just this reason, it is interesting to note that after 1800 Schelling quite renounced the Cartesian–Fichtean approach. His key move here was a shift in *Presentation of My System of Philosophy* from 1801 to a form of neutral monism in the spirit of Spinoza (the so-called Philosophy of Identity). This move implied a sort of retention of his earlier Fichtean denial of things in themselves in the sense of things or facts quite independent of the self, but it also implied an abandonment of his earlier Fichtean ideas of an (ontological and) epistemological primacy of the self and its first-person psychological perspective. Thus he writes in *Presentation of My System*:

> The thought of Reason should be expected of everyone; in order to think Reason as absolute . . . it is necessary to abstract from the thinker. For the one who makes this abstraction Reason immediately ceases to be something subjective, as it is imagined to be by most people, indeed it cannot even any longer be thought of as something objective, since something objective or thought only becomes possible in contrast to a thinker, from which one has here completely abstracted. (SW 1.4: 114–15)

And an especially clear statement of the crucial anti-Fichtean implication in question can be found a few years later in the *System of All Philosophy and of Philosophy of Nature in Particular* [*System der gesammten Philosophie und der Naturphilosophie insbesondere*] (1804):

> We hereby separate ourselves forever from that sphere of reflection in which a distinction is drawn between subject and object and our further theorizing can only be a development and search for the basis of the fact that what knows and what is known are one and the same. That distinguishing is itself already a product of our subjectivity and hence of our finitude. But it is precisely these that must entirely disappear in philosophizing. In truth and in itself there is nowhere any subject, any I, hence nor is there any object, any not-I. That I say 'I know' or 'I am the one who knows' is already the *prôton pseudos*. I know nothing, but my knowledge, to the extent that it is really mine, is no true knowledge. It is not I who know, but only the universe knows in me, if the knowledge that I call mine is an actual, a true knowledge. (SW 1.6: 140)[10]

In *Presentation of My System* from 1801 and in some roughly contemporaneous lecture notes that have now been published under the title "Main Moments from Schelling's Lectures Noted After Class" (likewise 1801)[11] Schelling tends, in the process of abandoning his commitment to his earlier Fichtean answer to skepticism, to abandon his earlier interest in skepticism itself as well. This temporarily leaves him committed to his new monistic philosophical position in the dogmatic way that I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (just as its main source of inspiration, Spinoza, had at least seemed to advance *his* version of it dogmatically and without much concern about skepticism). Although he still mentions skepticism at points, he now does so only in a cursory, dismissive way.[12] And although he still appeals to "intellectual intuition" as the standpoint

[10] Cf. Schelling's detailed critique of Fichte in *Further Presentations*, SW 1.4: 353ff., esp. 355, and later his detailed critique of Descartes in *On the History of Recent Philosophy* [*Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*] (1833/4), SW 1.10: 4ff., esp. 7–12.

[11] In Schelling 1988b. [12] See, for example, Schelling 1988b: 28.

that enables certain knowledge, now that his initial Fichtean subjectivism has given way to a monistic philosophy, the exact meaning of this expression has changed and has indeed become obscure.[13]

However, Schelling soon rethought the whole question of skepticism and philosophy and developed a much less dogmatic, more sophisticated position concerning it. This phase of his development has hardly been noticed in the secondary literature at all, let alone understood.

Frederick Beiser has made one of the few attempts to grapple with it. He holds that Schelling at this stage of his career at least attempted to provide a sort of transcendental argument for his monistic standpoint.[14] But he also complains that Schelling in the end failed to justify his monistic standpoint for the standpoint of the self.[15] However, both of these points seem to me quite misleading. To take them in reverse order: The second point (the complaint) is misleading because, as can already be seen from the passages just quoted above, by this stage of his career Schelling held the supposed standpoint of the self to be an *illusion*. The first point, that he aspired to give a transcendental argument for his monism, is also misleading, and for a related reason: if one means by a "transcendental argument" for his monism an argument that would show its truth to be a condition of the possibility of, say, subjective experience or everyday experiential knowledge of objects, then this cannot be his strategy, because he does not think there *is* such a thing as subjective experience or everyday experiential knowledge of objects; on the contrary, according to him, these are both merely illusions.

What I want to suggest is that the position on skepticism and philosophy that Schelling developed at this stage of his career was instead a quite different one – one for which he was heavily indebted to his friend and collaborator Hegel.

In order to perceive and understand the position in question, it is helpful to know that Friedrich Schlegel and then, under his influence, Hegel had very recently, during the period 1800–2, developed a whole dramatically new set of ideas about skepticism and philosophy. Since I have discussed this subject in some detail elsewhere,[16] I will only summarize the main points here without citing chapter and verse.

[13] Cf. Beiser 2002: 580ff., who helpfully discusses Schelling's various attempts to clarify what the expression now means in terms of the two models of artistic creation and mathematical knowledge conceived as construction à la Kant.

[14] Beiser 2002: 589–91. [15] Beiser 2002: 592–4.

[16] See Forster 1989, 1998, 2011, 2012, and Forthcoming.

Schlegel's initial development of the ideas in question occurred mainly in the *Lectures on Transcendental Philosophy* that he delivered in Jena in 1800–1, and which Hegel attended (a substantial transcript of these lectures survives). Hegel's subsequent elaboration of them occurred mainly in his essay *The Relation of Skepticism to Philosophy* from 1802 (along with several other essays from about the same period, such as *On the Difference Between the Fichtean and Schellingian Systems of Philosophy* [1801] and *On the Nature of Philosophical Critique* [1802]) and in his early drafts of a new Logic in *Logica et Metaphysica* and in some lecture notes that have now been published under the title "Main Ideas of Hegel's Lectures on Logic and Metaphysics" (both texts 1801–2).[17]

The key ideas that Schlegel and Hegel developed were these:

(1) For Schlegel and Hegel, skepticism is both the beginning and an essential aspect of any true philosophy (i.e., the sort of monistic philosophy of the Absolute that they both champion).
(2) For Schlegel and Hegel, the form of skepticism that is in question here, and which they believe to be the most philosophically viable form of it, is extremely radical, attacking even the claims of subjective experience and logical laws (including the law of contradiction).
(3) For Schlegel and Hegel, this skepticism indeed systematically destroys the "finite," or dualistic, standpoint of common sense entirely.
(4) For Hegel, this systematic skeptical destruction of the "finite" standpoint is to be performed by a new discipline that he calls "Logic." (This is a critical, introductory Logic that he developed in Jena from about 1801 onwards. It differs quite sharply in character from the better known Logic that he began to develop in about 1806 and eventually went on to publish in the *Science of Logic* and the *Encyclopedia*.)
(5) For Hegel, most so-called "skeptical" attacks that might seem to threaten the standpoint of the true philosophy, such as those that had been launched by Kant and Schulze, turn out to be based on the "finite," dualistic standpoint that this *higher* sort of skepticism discredits, and therefore turn out to pose no real threat to true philosophy.
(6) For Hegel, the standpoint of the true philosophy incorporates two special features that make it invulnerable even to such higher forms of skeptical attack: (a) It has no opposite, i.e. no contradictory or

[17] The lecture notes in question can be found in Schelling 1988b.

> contrary (this forestalls skeptical attacks that consist in making a case for an opposite position). (b) It unifies thought and being, concept and object (this forestalls skeptical attacks that consist in calling into question the occurrence of instances in reality of whatever concepts are being used).

Now it seems to me that in *Further Presentations* from 1802 and *Lectures on the Method of Academic Study* [*Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums*] from 1803 Schelling basically takes over this whole (Schlegel–)Hegel program concerning skepticism and philosophy.

Thus in *Further Presentations* we read:

> In opposition to the true philosophy, [criticism] is only a bad skepticism that, itself entirely entangled in reflection, believes that in reflection it has simultaneously attacked philosophy and destroyed it as speculation. True skepticism is entirely directed against reflection's cognition, but on the basis of the principle of true speculation ... But one can be sure that against speculation or true cognition it will never be able to find other weapons than those that are themselves taken from common or relative knowing, whose reality it must itself attack, while this reality is not merely called into doubt but unconditionally rejected by speculation ... The absolute mode of cognition, like the truth that it contains, has no real opposite outside itself ... Everyone who even has the idea of the Absolute ... knows immediately from the idea itself that in it an equal absolute unity of ideality and reality, of thought and being, is thought. (SW 1.4: 365–7)

And subsequently, Schelling continues the same line of thought in the *Lectures*, where he writes:

> Merely doubting the common and finite view of things is not ... philosophy; it must become a categorical knowledge of the nothingness of that view, and this negative knowledge must become equal with the positive intuition of absoluteness if it is even to raise itself to being genuine skepticism ... If [Logic] is to be a science of form, so to speak the pure doctrine-of-art of philosophy, then it would have to be what we have ... characterized under the name of dialectic. Such a Logic does not yet exist. If it is to be a pure representation of the forms of finitude in their relation to the Absolute, then it must be scientific skepticism ... But if one understands by Logic a purely formal ... science, then this would in its nature be a science directly opposed to philosophy, since philosophy precisely aims at the absolute unity of form and essence ... It is thus an entirely empirical doctrine which sets up the laws of the common Understanding as absolute, e.g. that to each being only one of two contradictorily opposed concepts applies, a principle which is quite correct in the sphere of finitude, but not

> in speculation, which only has its beginning in the equation of opposites. (SW 1.5: 269)

There is one small complication here that should be mentioned and addressed, though. The text *Further Presentations* was co-authored by Schelling and Hegel, and a case might therefore be made that whereas its more dogmatic passages are attributable to Schelling, the passages concerned with skepticism and philosophy that I have just quoted are attributable to Hegel. However, it seems reasonable to say that even if Hegel *wrote* the latter passages, Schelling, by publishing the work under his own name, at least *endorsed* them. Moreover, that point is reinforced by the fact that, as we have just seen, he subsequently continued the very same line of thought about skepticism and philosophy in the *Lectures*, which he authored alone.

This adoption by Schelling of the (Schlegel–)Hegel position concerning skepticism and philosophy constitutes an important and interesting phase in his career. However, it was short-lived – not surviving much beyond 1803, when, in the midst of increasing tensions with Hegel, he made the decision to leave Jena for Würzburg. Moreover, it was rather cursory and undeveloped in comparison with its original model in (Schlegel and) Hegel. For one thing, Schelling omitted an important historical dimension of the (Schlegel–)Hegel position: they had made a forceful case that a sharp distinction should be drawn between the superior form that skepticism normally took in antiquity (especially, in Pyrrhonism and Plato) and the inferior form that it usually takes in modernity, where it degenerates into being merely a sort of negative dogmatism that is itself vulnerable to (the right sort of) skeptical attack. For another thing, whereas at the time when Schelling was writing *Further Presentations* and the *Lectures* Hegel had already begun actually working out the sort of scientifically skeptical Logic in question here (and would continue doing so even more elaborately during the next few years in Jena), for Schelling the discipline never became much more than an idea.

III The Romanticism-inspired position (1821)

As was just mentioned, Schelling abandoned the (Schlegel–)Hegel position fairly quickly after tensions with Hegel developed and he decided to leave Jena for Würzburg in 1803. Thus already in the *Propadeutic to Philosophy* [*Propädeutik der Philosophie*] (1804) and *System of All Philosophy and of Philosophy of Nature in Particular* (1804) one searches in vain for this

position, or indeed for any significant concern with skepticism and its relation to philosophy at all. Instead, Schelling seems to have relapsed into a more dogmatic approach to philosophy again.

There is, though, at least one last attempt in Schelling's career to think hard about skepticism and its relation to philosophy. This occurs in *On the Nature of Philosophy as Science* [*Ueber die Natur der Philosophie als Wissenschaft*] (1821).

Markus Gabriel has rightly drawn attention to this essay as a significant stage in the development of Schelling's thought about skepticism and philosophy.[18] On Gabriel's reading, the basis of Schelling's position in the essay is Kant's doctrine of the regulative ideas – or more specifically, Kant's doctrine that the traditional idea of God as an object is really just a natural, but illusory, hypostatization of a rule that enjoins a sort of totalization in our construction of our empirical outlook, and which in particular has the function of guiding our empirical outlook towards both ever higher generalizations and ever lower differentiations in a way that is in principle never fully completable.

This reading of the essay is insightful and correct as far as it goes. But it also omits an important additional part of the background of Schelling's essay, namely certain further developments of the Kantian position just mentioned that had been undertaken in the meantime by Fichte and the Romantics (especially Friedrich Schlegel and Schleiermacher).

Fichte and the Romantics had revised Kant's original picture by adding two further theses that were not yet part of it, and which indeed subtly contradicted aspects of it: (1) that such an endless striving for totalization is not merely *regulative* of our empirical outlook (and its objects), but also *constitutive* thereof, i.e., essentially involved in our empirical outlook (and its objects) in such a way that without such an endless striving for totalization our empirical outlook (and its objects) could not even occur; and (2) that such an endless striving for totalization constitutes a sort of *freedom*, in particular a sort of constant surmounting of the limitations of objectivity.

Schelling's essay takes over this conception in its specifically Fichtean–Romantic version and develops it into a broader account of the human condition. According to this account, empirical knowledge would require a knowledge of totality, but that is never really attainable, only a never-ending approximation to it in the form of a series of hypostatizations of totality, which, since they are merely hypostatizations and therefore

[18] Gabriel 2007.

illusory, always need to be overcome, so that neither knowledge of totality itself nor empirical knowledge is ever really achievable, only a progressive series of attempts at them, which does, however, have the important merit of constituting a sort of freedom:

> The human being would like to have the universal consciousness as his individual consciousness. But he thereby overcomes the universal consciousness itself . . . Hence by wanting to bring that pure consciousness close he destroys it. Here, then, the contradiction that the human being negates what he wants through his wanting. From this contradiction there arises that inward, erring movement, in that what seeks so-to-speak drives what it seeks in a constant flight before itself . . . It enjoys for the first time the freedom and bliss of not-knowing. It is now . . . what we can call *free thought*. Thought is the giving-up of knowledge; knowledge is bound, thought in complete freedom, and . . . all free thought is the result of an overcome tension, a separation, a crisis. (SW 1.9: 235)[19]

Schelling's broader account here thus in effect amounts to a distinctive and moderate form of skepticism according to which knowledge is never really attainable, but is instead only approachable in an endless series of approximations, a state of affairs that, though, has the important benefit of constituting a sort of freedom.

This position is again very similar to one that had already been developed by the Romantics, especially Friedrich Schlegel (in his conception of "irony" from the late 1790s, his *Lectures on Transcendental Idealism* from 1800–1, and his Cologne lectures on philosophy from 1804–6) and Schleiermacher (in his Dialectics lectures).[20]

Moreover, again like Friedrich Schlegel and Schleiermacher before him, Schelling in this essay presents the Platonic Socrates as the paradigmatic representative of the moderate form of skepticism in question and of philosophy's duty to uphold it:

> He is the master of this art [of philosophy] who always remains sober, who is able to stop the movement, to force it to pause, who thus as it were allows the movement no step that is not necessary . . . One can say: the philosopher . . . finds himself in constant negotiation with the one driving onwards, the one so-to-speak constantly yearning for knowledge; he must make every step difficult for him, so-to-speak fight over every step with

[19] Cf. SW 1.9: 237–9, 242–4.

[20] Pace Gabriel 2007, I would not say that Schelling's position in this essay should be closely assimilated to Hegel's. For, unlike Schelling and the Romantics, Hegel believes that a definitive knowledge of totality *is* achievable in the end, so that the fate of a mere endless progression towards knowledge, and hence of skepticism, can ultimately be avoided.

> him. [There takes place] this inward intercourse, this constant conversation, in which there are two principles, one that is knowledge itself . . . but does not know, the other that *knows* but is not . . . *knowledge itself* – only not-knowing knowledge – . . . This relationship has been represented in person by that . . . truly divine man . . . Socrates, without any doubt the point of light, the brightest phenomenon of all antiquity, . . . Socrates who when he said that he only knew that he did not know wanted thereby to indicate his relationship to the one actually producing knowledge whom he sought to stimulate everywhere and wherever he could. (SW 1.9: 238–9)[21]

In short, very much like the Romantics before him, Schelling during this relatively late phase of his thought champions a specific moderate form of skepticism according to which knowledge is never fully attainable, but is only approachable in an endless approximation, while this also constitutes a sort of freedom, and he sees it as the task of the philosopher to uphold this specific form of skepticism in the face of the constant threat of a relapse into dogmatism, considering Plato's Socrates to be the model for philosophy's performance of this task.

IV The Positive Philosophy

It is an interesting question to what extent Schelling's final philosophical position, the so-called Positive Philosophy that he developed during the last two decades of his life, is continuous with the quasi-Romantic position just described.

In central statements of his Positive Philosophy such as *Other Deduction of the Principles of the Positive Philoso*phy [*Andere Deduktion der Prinzipien der positiven Philosophie*] (1839) and *Introduction to the Philosophy of Revelation or Grounding of the Positive Philosophy* [*Einleitung in die Philosophie der Offenbarung oder Begründung der positive Philosophie*] (1842–3) he retains many central features of his previous quasi-Romantic position, including the vision of a sort of canceling and re-positing of being within the horizon of the Absolute that recurs endlessly and constitutes a form of freedom,[22] and the championing of Socrates as the upholder of the skeptical aspect of this process.[23] On the other hand, he now also insists

[21] Cf. earlier Schelling's *The Ages of the World* [*Die Weltalter*] (1811), in Schelling 1946: 1:103 and later Schelling's *Introduction to the Philosophy of Revelation or Grounding of the Positive Philosophy* [*Einleitung in die Philosophie der Offenbarung oder Begründung der positiven Philosophie*] (1842–3), SW 11.3: 97–100.

[22] See, for example, SW 11.3: 133, 152–3; SW 11.4: 337–56. [23] See SW 11.3: 97–100.

that there is a form of being that is prior to this process (SW 11.4: 337–56), a form of being that transcends reason and is simply experienced (SW 11.3: 152–3). And this looks very much like an attempt to *escape* the sort of endless series of skeptical destructions that the quasi-Romantic position had taken to be the final word about the human condition.

If this interpretation of the Positive Philosophy is correct, then one can add to the three forms of anti-skepticism developed by Schelling during the course of his career that have already been distinguished above this final form of anti-skepticism as well.

V Conclusion

Hegel's critical implication in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* of 1807 that Schelling was merely dogmatic, neglecting the challenge of skepticism and the duty to frame philosophy in a way that addresses it, therefore turns out to be misleading. By the time Hegel published this implication, there had indeed been periods of such dogmatism in Schelling's development, namely the period of his *Presentation of My System of Philosophy* (1801) and then again the period immediately after 1803. But his more usual stance had been and would continue to be one of showing considerable concern about skepticism and attempting to cast his philosophy in a way that would take it into account and cope with it. Indeed, as we have seen, there were at least three distinct phases of his career of which this was true, each time in a strikingly different way – two of those phases preceding Hegel's remarks (the Fichtean phase of 1794–1800 and the Hegelian phase of 1802–3), one of them coming only later (the Romantic phase of 1821).

However, on further reflection, there is perhaps also a little more truth to Hegel's critical characterization of Schelling than this reply yet concedes. For even if, as we have seen to be the case, Schelling's normal stance was one of concern about skepticism and of trying to take it into account in the framing of his own philosophy, we have also seen that the main specific forms that this stance took were rather unstable and changing, not particularly original (being essentially borrowed from other people, especially Fichte, Hegel, and the Romantics), and not very fully developed. This fact, together with the fact that he periodically relapsed into dogmatism, might with some justification be taken to show that he was by temperament a dogmatist who, while he was indeed swept along by his age's almost obsessive concern with skepticism and with the need to address it in philosophy, was so rather contrary to his own natural inclinations.

CHAPTER 3

The concept of life in early Schelling

Lara Ostaric

I Introduction

In secondary literature, Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* is most commonly discussed within the context of Kant's epistemology and the transcendental deduction, which was swiftly identified by the generation of young Kantians as a skeptical problem, i.e., the need to demonstrate that our a priori conditions of knowledge indeed determine their object.[1] This, however, is puzzling given that for Schelling "[m]ere reflection ... is a spiritual sickness of mankind" and the "essence of man is action" (AA 1.5: 71; Schelling 1988a: 10–11). The central concern that motivates Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* is better understood within the context of the question of unity of theoretical and practical reason with which Schelling was familiar from his study of Kant's third *Critique*. In the third *Critique*, Kant discusses the occurrences of beauty and organisms in nature as a sign that nature is amenable to the minimal (i.e., cognitive) ends of our rationality as well as its final ends (i.e., freedom understood as our capacity to realize the moral good in the world).[2] But unlike Kant, for whom the occurrences of beauty and organisms in the world exhibit (given the limitations of our understanding to mechanical explanations) a contingent harmony of nature with the demands of our rationality, Schelling demands a necessary correspondence between reason and nature: "For what we want is not that Nature should coincide with the laws of our mind by chance (as if through some third intermediary), but that she herself, necessarily and originally, should not only express, but even realize, the laws of our mind, and that she is, and is called Nature only insofar as she does so" (AA 1.5: 107; Schelling 1988a: 41–2).[3]

[1] See Beiser 2002: 509. [2] See Ostaric 2010.

[3] In the Cambridge translation of the *Ideas*, the German word *Geist* is translated as "mind." In this chapter, I occasionally use a less deflationary term "spirit."

Schelling anchors the necessary correspondence between the self and nature in the claim that nature is not a dead object of self-consciousness, but that which is at the same time a subject and its own object. He takes the latter to be the essential characteristic of *life*. Nature must not be conceived as a dead mechanism, but as a living organization and as an "analogue of reason" (AA 1.8: 31) because to be one's own subject and object defines both the spontaneity of self-consciousness and the spontaneity of self-determination. Thus, nature that is no longer represented mechanically, but as an "analogue of reason," is nature that is necessarily amenable with both the minimal (i.e., cognitive) and final ends of our rationality (i.e., freedom).

In this chapter, I will proceed by first summarizing in section II Kant's dynamic conception of matter in the *Metaphysical Foundations of Natural Science* [*Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*] (1786).[4] The latter was influential for Schelling because it served as an impetus to conceive of matter as an actively emerging order, a unity that arises out of a conflict of forces, and a phenomenal manifestation of the principle of life.[5] I then trace the development of Schelling's conception of life through the three seminal writings of his early *Naturphilosophie – Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* [*Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Natur*] (1797), *On the World-Soul – a Hypothesis of the Higher Physics for the Purpose of Explaining the Universal Organism* [*Von der Weltseele – eine Hypothese der höheren Physik zur Erklärung des allgemeinen Organismus*] (1798), and *First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature* [*Erster Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie*][6] (1799) – in sections III, IV, and V respectively. My aim with this narrative is to show that from the early inception of his *Naturphilosophie*, the necessary correspondence between the self and nature, and hence the concept of life, presupposes for Schelling the common ground of both mind and nature that unifies both and can be identified with neither, a "bond [*Band*] which couples our mind to Nature, or that hidden organ through which Nature speaks to our mind or our mind to Nature" (AA 1.5: 106; Schelling 1988a: 41). Hence, I will demonstrate that his early *Naturphilosophie* is a continuous progressive development of his philosophical system grounded in the knowledge of the principle that transcends both self and nature and which is the objective correlate of the creative principle of genius of Schelling's

[4] Hereinafter: *Metaphysical Foundations*. [5] See Jähnig 1989: 225.
[6] Hereinafter the *Ideas*, *On the World-Soul*, and the *First Outline* respectively. Citations from Schelling's works are my own translations unless indicated otherwise.

Transzendentalphilosophie.[7] In conclusion, I offer a brief evaluation of Schelling's early conception of life. I contend that the early Schelling is caught between the Scylla of dogmatically grounding natural science on *Naturphilosophie*, the object of which is the cognition of a principle – namely the principle of life – that is in no need of systematic justification, and the Charybdis of conceding that science should be a body of knowledge not grounded on absolutely necessary principles.[8]

II Kant's construction of matter in the *Metaphysical Foundations*

In the Transcendental Doctrine of Method, Kant distinguishes philosophical cognition, which is "rational cognition from concepts," from mathematical cognition, which follows from "the construction of concepts."[9] The method of the former is "analytic" and "discursive," that is, it consists in analysis of given concepts for which the intuition is not immediately given. The method of the latter is "synthetic," that is, it consists in "the construction of concepts" and, according to Kant, to construct a concept, is "to exhibit *a priori* the intuition corresponding to it."[10] Mathematical cognition is a pure or a priori cognition because the intuition required to construct a mathematical concept is not an empirical intuition, a perceptual manifold given in experience, but a pure a priori intuition, space and time. Because the construction of mathematical concepts requires an intuition, even though a pure one, it presupposes an individual object which, nevertheless, expresses a universal concept. This Kant claims is possible because in constructing the individual drawn figure "we have taken account only of the *action* of constructing the concept, to which many determinations, e.g., those of the magnitude of the sides and the angles, are entirely indifferent, and thus we have abstracted from these differences, which do not alter the concept of a triangle."[11] In other words, in the process of constructing the concept of, for example, a triangle we take into account the rule that determines the necessary feature of *any* triangle and not just the specific individual triangle we have imagined or drawn. However, mathematical cognition cannot arise by considering a concept *in abstracto* but, rather, it "considers the universal in the

[7] See Ostaric 2012a. My narrative thereby questions the unfortunate legacy of this philosopher (due to Hegel) as a protean writer who continuously and erratically changed his own philosophical positions.
[8] In my narrative, I will not be discussing in detail Schelling's intensive engagement with the empirical sciences of his time as this would derail the discussion from the main focus of this chapter.
[9] KrV, A713/B741. [10] KrV, A714/B742. [11] KrV, A713/B741; my emphasis.

particular."[12] That is to say that to have and understand a mathematical concept cannot be done prior to providing a definition for it, prior or independent of exhibiting or drawing the concept in pure intuition. Thus, mathematical cognition, which is grounded on definitions, axioms, and demonstrations, yields apodictic certainty and "secures all inferences by placing each of them before our eyes [*vor Augen gestellt wird*]."[13] Philosophy, on the other hand, can only "explain" [*erklären*] and its body of knowledge can never offer a "self-evident" or "intuitive certainty" of mathematics which "in the intuition of the object . . . can connect the predicates of the latter *a priori* and immediately."[14] But this clear demarcation between philosophical and mathematical knowledge in the first *Critique* is blurred in the *Metaphysical Foundations*.

In the Preface to the *Metaphysical Foundations*, Kant argues that "[a]ll proper natural science . . . requires a *pure* part, on which the apodictic certainty that reason seeks therein can be based." But pure rational cognition, as he already argued in the first *Critique*, proceeds from either "mere concepts and is called pure philosophy or metaphysics" or "from the construction of concepts, by means of the presentation of the object in an *a priori* intuition" and "is called mathematics." Kant argues further that proper natural science "presupposes, in the first place, metaphysics of nature" because it is concerned with the laws that govern the existence of a thing. If "general metaphysics" is in question, then these laws are transcendental, i.e., they are the analogies of experience of the first *Critique* that "make possible the concept of a nature in general, even without relation to any determinate object of experience." "Special metaphysics," on the other hand, is concerned with a priori cognition of "a particular nature of this or that kind of thing, for which an empirical concept is given," that is, either with the empirical concept of matter (physics), or the concrete phenomena of inner sense (psychology). But metaphysics of nature is a necessary and not a sufficient condition for proper natural science. "[I]n any natural science," writes Kant, "there can be only as much *proper* science as there is *mathematics* therein." If we wish to have a priori knowledge of things that exist or are actual,

[12] KrV, A714/B742.

[13] While Kant's emphasis on mathematical construction as "presenting," or "exhibiting" the universal in a particular influenced Schelling's notion of construction in his Philosophy of Identity (see Breazeale's "'Exhibiting the Particular in the Universal': Philosophical Construction and Intuition in Schelling's Philosophy of Identity (1801–1804)" in this volume), Kant's emphasis on the *action* or making of mathematical concepts in pure intuition influenced Schelling's notion of construction in his early period.

[14] KrV, A733/B761–A734/B762.

we must have knowledge of their real (as opposed to merely logical) possibility. The latter can be established a priori only though mathematical construction.[15] It follows that if something is to be called a proper natural science, it must be capable of constructing its most fundamental concepts since this is the only way to ground the necessity of its principles.

For Kant, chemistry and psychology are not receptive to the application of mathematics (i.e., mathematics cannot apply to the phenomena of inner sense and the principles of chemistry for Kant are merely empirical). Thus, a proper natural science is concerned with a priori principles that govern the objects of outer sense, that is, bodies. Hence, the *Metaphysical Foundations* is concerned with the doctrine of matter in motion (physics). This special metaphysics of corporeal nature understood as proper science of matter in motion "does an excellent and indispensable service for *general* metaphysics, in that the former furnishes examples (instances *in concreto*) in which to realize the concepts and propositions of the latter (properly speaking, transcendental philosophy), that is, to give a mere form of thought sense and meaning."[16]

According to Kant, the Cartesian mathematical–mechanical mode of explanation seeks to explain all the properties and actions of matter by its purely geometrical properties, i.e., it approaches matter as an inert extension. The metaphysical–dynamical mode of explanation, which is the topic of his *Metaphysical Foundations*, seeks to explain all the properties and actions of matter by appealing to its fundamental moving forces. If matter is considered with respect to its quantity, then matter is that which is movable in space. If matter is considered with respect to its quality,[17] then matter is that which is impenetrable, has a capacity to resist the motion of other bodies that try to penetrate into the same space. This property is the manifestation of the repulsive force. But if there were only repulsive force, matter would be infinitely dispersed and space would be empty. Another fundamental force is required that acts in opposition to the first, that is,

[15] See Kant AA 04: 469–70.

[16] Kant AA 04: 478. The exact interpretation of this passage, which appears as a mere afterthought in the Preface, is controversial. Some commentators argue that special metaphysics is to serve as a mere illustration of the principles of general metaphysics. Others argue that Kant intended the construction of matter to secure the objective reality of transcendental philosophy. For the most recently offered arguments in favor of the latter view see Förster 2012: 66–8.

[17] Kant argues that in order for his project to be properly metaphysical and have the completeness of metaphysics, his investigation must be guided by the table of categories. Hence, after the first two chapters of the *Metaphysical Foundations*, which analyze the concept of matter with respect to the categories of quantity and quality, the remaining two chapters, "Mechanics" and "Phenomenology," analyze matter in accordance to the categories of relation (thus in relation to another matter) and the categories of modality respectively.

attractive force.[18] Attractive force is also not sufficient to explain how matter fills space because if there were only attraction, matter would contract to a single point and space again would be empty. Thus, both repulsive and attractive forces are necessary in order to explain how matter fills space and, furthermore, they are empirically given fundamental forces that cannot be constructed.

Given the above, there seems to be a tension in the *Metaphysical Foundations*. On one hand, Kant wishes to suggest that a proper natural science must presuppose a priori construction of matter[19] and, on the other, matter consists of the fundamental forces of attraction and repulsion that are empirically given and cannot be constructed. This tension can be resolved if one takes into consideration that Kant speaks of the "principles for the construction of the concepts" (in the plural) and not the "concept" (in the singular) "that belong to the possibility of matter in general."[20] Thus, when the concept of matter is analyzed into its "partial concepts" [*Teilbegriffe*], some of those partial concepts, but not all, can be mathematically constructed. For example, the partial concept of impenetrability cannot be constructed because the empirical character of the concept of matter primarily rests on it. But the partial concept of motion of matter can be mathematically constructed.

Nevertheless it still remains ambiguous that the principles for the construction of those partial concepts of matter belong to "metaphysics of corporeal nature" and thus to "pure philosophy" and not to mathematics.[21] This blurred boundary between philosophical and mathematical cognition in Kant's *Metaphysical Foundations* inspired Schelling's ambitious "metaphysical construction of matter" intended to secure the objective reality of the minimal ends of our rationality, i.e., cognition, and also its final ends, i.e., freedom. In the following section I will summarize Schelling's metaphysical construction of matter in the *Ideas*, which represents Schelling's initial thoughts on the concept of life.

III Schelling's construction of matter in the *Ideas* (1797)

The central part of the *Ideas* are the first six chapters of Book II, where Schelling joins Kant in his criticism of mechanistic accounts of nature and offers a "metaphysico-dynamical" conception of matter.[22] However, unlike

[18] Kant identifies attractive force with Newtonian gravitation.
[19] See Kant AA 04: 470, 472–3.
[20] See Friedman 2013: 28–31.
[21] Friedman 2013: 46n.
[22] My discussion here will ignore the supplements to the *Ideas* that Schelling added six years later, in 1803, in the second edition of the work when his system of identity was already developed. Those

Kant, who, as we saw above, expressed ambivalence with respect to the possibility of a mathematical construction of matter, Schelling claimed that this was necessary.[23] Following Kant, he argues that the repulsive and attractive forces "pertain to the *essence of matter*." However, for Schelling, unlike Kant, these forces are not "*objects* of possible intuition," but "*conditions* for the possibility of all objective knowledge" (AA 1.5: 208; Schelling 1988a: 171) insofar as "whatever is an *object* of this [our external] intuition must be intuited as *matter*, i.e., as the product of attractive and repulsive force" (AA 1.5: 210; Schelling 1988a: 173). Having identified the origins of the essential elements of matter as transcendental, Schelling claims that a "synthetic procedure" is now necessary in order to show the objective reality of the concept, that is, an intuition corresponding to it. Schelling favors Kant's mathematical construction as a model for this "synthetic procedure": "It is safer, therefore, to allow the concept to arise, as it were, before our eyes, and thus to find the ground of its necessity in its own origin" (AA 1.5: 209; Schelling 1988a: 172).[24]

Schelling derives the rule and the elements for the construction of matter[25] from Fichte's construction of the "I" in intellectual intuition in his *Foundations of the Entire Science of Knowledge* [*Grundlage der gesammten Wissenschaftslehre*] (1794).[26] He identifies Fichte's first principle, "The I originally and unconditionally posits its own existence" (or "I am I" [I = I]), the notion of pure spontaneity, with Kant's repulsive force.[27] Schelling identifies Fichte's second absolutely certain principle of *Wissenschaftslehre 1794*, "a not-I is unqualifiedly posited in opposition to the I" (or "not-A is not equal to A"),[28] according to which the self depends on something that is different from itself, with Kant's attractive force that is "restricting" in relation to the original "unrestricted" force (AA 1.5: 214; Schelling 1988a: 176). And just like for Fichte, the second principle is conditioned by the first and the first principle is conditioned by the second; for Schelling, "Repulsive force without attractive force is *formless*; attractive force without repulsive force *has no object*. The one [repulsion]

supplements no longer follow the transcendental method of the construction of matter, but a neo-Platonic self-division of the Absolute.

[23] Schelling only mentions "construction" once in the chapter on chemistry (AA 1.5: 248) and, instead, he speaks of "the first origin of the concept of matter from the nature of the intuition and of the human spirit" (AA 1.5: 208).

[24] See KrV, A714/B742 and section II of this essay.

[25] For a very helpful distinction between (a) the object of construction (matter), (b) elements (from which the object is constructed), (c) rule of construction (that specifies the relation between the elements), see Förster 2012: 68.

[26] Hereinafter: *Wissenschaftslehre 1794*. [27] Fichte SW1: 98. [28] Fichte SW1: 104.

represents the original, *unconscious*, mental self-activity, which by nature is unrestricted; the other represents the *conscious*, determinate activity, which first gives form, limit and outline to everything" (AA 1.5: 223; Schelling 1988a: 187).

Fichte's third principle of the *Wissenschaftslehre 1794* aims to resolve the contradiction that follows as a result of the preceding two principles, namely, the simultaneous assertion of the self's absolute self-determination (in the first principle) and its finitude (in the second). The third principle is the following: "In the self I posit a divisible not-I to the divisible I."[29] In other words, the "absolute" nature of the I can be reconciled with its finitude if the latter is conceived as also posited by the former.[30] For Schelling, the corresponding scheme of this principle in outer intuition is the "quality of matter" (AA 1.5: 237; Schelling 1988a: 201), or cohesion, and chemistry, the science that investigates it. The determination of matter having certain cohesiveness is something "contingent" to us and does not admit of a priori demonstration. Thus, for Schelling, just like for Kant, some aspects of matter cannot be a priori constructed. But Schelling's determination of the quality of matter here follows closely Fichte's notion of *Anstoβ* [check], that is, his reduction of Kant's thing-in-itself to a check on the subject's unlimited spontaneity and according to which the matter of sensation is not something that the subject passively receives through its senses, but rather a product of the subject's own spontaneity that is merely blocked by the *Anstoβ* and then reflected back into itself. Nevertheless, Fichte's notion of an *Anstoβ* is still his admission that the self is ultimately dependent on something that is not-self.

Thus, the formal element of both consciousness and object is for Schelling the element of *quantity* by which he understands a "common image," a "common archetype," a general schema of materiality as such that is accomplished by the interplay of attractive and repulsive forces in "equilibrium." The material aspect of both consciousness and its object (which gives both also their reality) is the qualitative aspect of matter where forces are present not "as such" and as "only in our concept," but as a "specific" force that has a specific degree. This degree of force, which can

[29] Fichte SW1: 110.

[30] It is well known that this principle finally receives its true content in the practical part of the *Wissenschaftslehre 1794* where by introducing the concept of "striving" [*streben*] Fichte preserves simultaneously the unconditional nature of the I and the existence of the not-I. In other words, the infinite and unconditioned aspect of the I is the fact that its goal, insofar as it is a moral I, is to demand that the not-I conform to it. The finite and conditioned aspect of the I is the fact that this goal can never be completely attained. See Neuhouser 1990: 51.

only be sensed or felt, is achieved if the forces "deviate from the equilibrium in which they are originally and necessarily conceived." The latter is the "contingent" and the former the "necessary" aspect of the construction of matter (AA 1.5: 250; Schelling 1988a: 216).[31] Moreover, the contingent element of the construction of matter manifests itself as a "*free play* of the two basic forces," which in this play "alternately gain the upper hand." This movement, or play of forces that Schelling in the Introduction to the *Ideas* identifies with "life,"[32] "must occur according to a rule" and, hence, it presupposes a cause or a principle which, because it is contingent, "must not belong to the conditions of the possibility of matter itself" (AA 1.5: 236; Schelling 1988a: 200). Schelling here clearly incorporates Kant's notion of free play of the cognitive powers of imagination and understanding, which are the conditions of the possibility of a pure aesthetic judgment (both on the part of receivers and producers). Just like for Kant a beautiful object presupposes inexhaustiveness, and, hence points to a causality (principle of purposiveness without a purpose) that reaches beyond the resources of the mere understanding,[33] so for Schelling the free play of the forces of matter reaches beyond the resources of mechanical causality, which is the object of the understanding.[34]

Schelling's indebtedness to Fichte in developing the dialectical method of his construction of matter is widely acknowledged in secondary literature.[35] However, the original aspects of Schelling's construction of matter in the *Ideas* are less frequently discussed. Because in the *Ideas* Schelling adopts the dialectical method of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre 1794*, it is tempting to conclude that the elements and rule of Schelling's construction of nature in the *Ideas* are grounded in Fichte's conception of intellectual intuition and that it is Fichte's intellectual intuition that Schelling has in mind when he refers to "the first origin of the concept of matter" as that which is derived "from the nature of the intuition and of the human spirit" (AA 1.5: 208). In the *Ideas*, Schelling argues that intuition is not, as some philosophers have argued "the lowest level of knowledge, but the *primary one*, the *highest* in the human mind, that

[31] It is from this perspective of the end results of Book II that one should approach Schelling's discussion in Book I, where he rejects the mechanical explanation of the scientific theories of his time of heat, light, electricity, and magnetism, and offers his dynamical explanation of the same, i.e., the explanation of these phenomena in terms of the movement of the fundamental forces of matter.

[32] Schelling 1988a: 36. [33] See Ostaric 2012b: 90–1.

[34] From this, one can conclude that the feeling of the quality of matter through which this contingent element is manifested should not be conceived empirically as mere receptivity, but closer to Kant's conception of the "feeling of life" [*Lebensgefühl*] (KU, Kant AA 05: 204), mind's own self-affection.

[35] See for example Beiser 2002: 515.

which truly constitutes its mental nature" (AA 1.5: 215; Schelling 1988a: 177). Moreover, it is a "creative power within us" (AA 1.5: 216; Schelling 1988a: 178) and "man's artistic faculty" (AA 1.5: 248; Schelling 1988a: 214). For Fichte, the intellectual intuition is the subject's non-representational awareness of itself.[36] One therefore could argue that this basic awareness of oneself understood as the subject's pure spontaneity is what Schelling understands by "our creative capacity." After all, this concept is traditionally understood as a divine intuition that *creates* its own object. But Fichte mentions his conception of intellectual intuition only sparsely in his *Aenesidemus* review and not at all in the *Wissenschaftslehre 1794* until later in the Introductions to the *Wissenschaftslehre 1794*, which were written in 1797 and were not available to Schelling at the time of his writing of the *Ideas*. Instead, I wish to argue that Schelling's conception of intuition should be understood in light of his own original conception of a "creative reason" [*schöpferische Vernunft*] (AA 1.3: 80).[37]

In §77 of the third *Critique*, Kant describes a unique whole-to-parts process that is characteristic of the intuitive understanding. An intuitive understanding is, unlike our own human understanding, non-discursive. Our human discursive understanding is defined by its dependence on given sensible data, the manifoldness of the given empirical intuition, which it subsequently subsumes under an abstract "analytic universal," i.e., a concept. An intuitive understanding, *intellectus archetypus*, generates its own content from a "synthetic universal" and, therefore, avoids the contingency of fit between a particular and a universal, which is typical of a discursive intellect. Indeed, in the *Ideas*, Schelling refers to the philosopher's construction of matter as a product that exhibits a unique whole-to-parts relation that pertains to the products of the intuitive understanding: "This product does not exist, therefore, through composition of its parts; on the contrary, its parts exist only after the whole – only now a possible object of the dividing understanding – has become real through a creative power (which alone can bring forth a *whole*)" (AA 1.5: 216–17; Schelling 1988a: 178). Thus only with the results of the *Naturphilosophie*, which presupposes the principles that extend beyond those of the understanding,

[36] Cf. Neuhouser 1990: 68. Fichte developed his conception of intellectual intuition in defense of Schulze's attack on Reinhold's interpretation of Kant's critical philosophy and his "principle of consciousness [*der Satz des Bewußtseins*]." For Reinhold, the self-awareness involved in representing an object was itself a type of representation, which then presupposes another subject as a bearer of this representation and so on ad infinitum. Fichte intended his conception of intellectual intuition as a solution to this infinite regress.

[37] Ostaric 2012a: 71.

is natural science, the object of the understanding, possible.[38] Moreover, this special capacity of creation is not accessible to everyone: "To exercise this power of *intuition* must be the first aim of all education. For it is that which makes man into man. To nobody but a blind man can it be denied *that he sees*. But that he *intuits* with consciousness – that calls for a free mind and a spiritual organ which are withheld from so many" (AA 1.5: 216n; Schelling 1988a: 178n).

Thus, when the philosopher performs her construction, from the perspective of her *action*, her mind is the "invisible Nature" because the principle or the rule of her construction extends beyond the discursivity of the understanding. But from the perspective of her *product*, "Nature . . . [is] Mind made visible" (AA 1.5: 107; Schelling 1988a: 42) insofar as it represents nature as objectification of the movements of the basic forces of the human spirit. It is in this context also that we should approach Schelling's following claim: "The free man alone *knows* that there *is* a world outside him; to the other it is nothing but a *dream*, from which he never awakes" (AA 1.5: 212; Schelling 1988a: 174). The philosopher is thus free insofar as she takes the standpoint from which matter is a product of her "creation" or "construction," her own spontaneity, and not something she, according to the mechanistic theories, passively receives in the form of impressions. It is only through her "creation" or "construction" that she can also have a complete certitude of its existence.

Schelling's mere hints in the *Ideas* that the *movement* of matter's fundamental forces and, hence, the principle of life, extends beyond the conditions of the possibility of matter itself become fully explicit in his treaties *On the World-Soul* (1798).

IV Organisms as "self-organizing matter"[39] in *On the World-Soul*

In *On the World-Soul*, Schelling continues with his critique of mechanistic conceptions of nature he initiated in the *Ideas*. However, while his critique of mechanism in the *Ideas* developed through the construction of matter and his discussion of the Kantian forces of attraction and repulsion, his central concern in *On the World-Soul* is construction of the concept "life" and the overcoming of the separation between mechanism and organism.[40]

[38] See also AA 1.5: 93; Schelling 1988a: 30.

[39] AA 1.5: 99; Schelling 1988a: 35. Schelling already discusses organisms in the Introduction to the *Ideas*, but does not develop this topic in the main body of the text.

[40] In *On the World-Soul*, the paradigm example of organism is animal life. Schelling devotes only a few pages to plants because for him they are an "appearance of life," that is, they are the "negative of the

This is to be accomplished by demonstrating that there is a common principle which "fluctuates between inorganic and organic nature" and "is the first cause of all changes in the former and the final ground of all activity in the latter" (AA 1.6: 67). This first principle is what "the ancient philosophy greeted as the universal soul of nature and which some physicists of those times identified with the creative and formative aether (the most noble part [*Antheil*] of nature)" (AA 1.6: 257).

In his *Timaeus* commentary (1794), Schelling already discusses Plato's notion of the world-soul:

> ψυχη is nothing but: *the original principle of motion*, αρχη χινησεως . . . Because Plato considered matter as something entirely heterogeneous from godly being, something that contradicts the pure form of lawfulness in godly understanding, he presupposed that the present world received nothing from God but its form. Insofar as the form, which the God gave to the world, referred only to the form of the movement of the world, so the world originally had an authentic principle of movement, independent of God, which, as the principle that belongs to matter, contradicted all rules and lawfulness and was first brought within the limits of lawfulness through the form (περασ [*sic*]), which the godly understanding gave to the world. (Schelling 1994: 28f.)

The soul as the "original principle of motion" is not godly like the *nous*, but it is eternal and invisible and, hence, it is possible to think of its unification with the *nous*. And because the world-soul serves as the connecting, third principle, between the world and *nous*, and all the form (lawfulness and regularity) leads back to this principle, the entire world in its concept can be seen as ζωον εμψυχον, an "insouled organism."

For Schelling, the "formative drive" [*Bildungstrieb*] of organic formations, that is, the fact that they can be the cause and effect of themselves, is the phenomenal manifestation of this "original principle of motion." In Kant's third *Critique*, *Bildungstrieb* stands for a unity of mechanistic and teleological explanations in our representations of organic formations.[41] Kant employs this concept as a synonym for his principle of objective purposiveness that remains always regulative and not constitutive and

life process" (AA 1.6: 185). This is because an animal has life "inside itself," but animals "continuously produce alone the enlivening principle which comes to plants only through a foreign influence," that is, light (AA 1.6: 185).

[41] Kant takes over the concept of *Bildungstrieb* from the biologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840) with whom he also corresponded. But for Blumenbach *Bildungstrieb* was a causal explanatory principle of the origin of organized organic formations from simple matter, something Kant denied we could ever know. Hence, in the third *Critique*, Kant employs Blumenbach's concept for the ends of his own philosophical position. See Richards 2000.

which "leaves natural mechanism an indeterminable but at the same time also unmistakable role."[42] But unlike Kant who claims ignorance with respect to our knowledge of the original constitution of organic formations, Schelling argues that *Bildungstrieb* serves as a "reminder to the natural researcher that the first cause of organization should not be sought in matter (in its dead, formative forces), but beyond it" (AA 1.6, 217). Thus, Schelling openly transgresses the limits that, according to Kant, are set to our human understanding:

> But when someone goes beyond this concept [*Bildungstrieb*] and inquires about the cause through which the formative drive [*Bildungstrieb*] is continuously present in organized matter, then they confess their ignorance and demand that everyone remain ignorant with them. Some wish to argue that Kant in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* endorsed such explanations. By the way, regarding the assurance that it is impossible to go beyond the *Bildungstrieb*, we can at best answer *that* we have gone beyond it. (AA 1.6: 218)

While Schelling still perceives himself as a true Kantian, he ascribes to Kant a view that Kant clearly does not hold, namely, that the supersensible principle, which is the common principle of the mechanical and teleological explanation, is accessible to our understanding.[43] For Kant, this is only possible for the intuitive understanding, *intellectus archetypus*. Our human, "image-dependent" discursive understanding, is defined by its dependence on given sensible data, the manifoldness of the given empirical intuition, which it subsequently subsumes under an abstract "analytic universal," i.e., a concept. An intuitive understanding generates its own content from a "synthetic universal" and, therefore, avoids the contingency of fit between a particular and a universal that is typical of a discursive intellect.[44] Hence, by claiming that we have an insight into the original principle of unification of contingency and necessity, freedom and nature, Schelling suggests that the transcendental philosopher who performs the construction of the concept "life" proceeds like *intellectus archetypus*.

The question, however, remains why, if the philosopher in his construction of the concept "life" proceeds like *intellectus archetypus* for whom there is no opposition between contingency and necessity, Schelling still insists, as he did in the *Ideas*, on this opposition that is characteristic of a discursive and not of an intuitive understanding:

[42] KU, Kant AA 05: 424. [43] See KU, Kant AA 05: 388, 412–13.
[44] See KU, §77, Kant AA 05: 407–8.

> The concept *Bildungstrieb* presupposes that the *Bildung* is not *blind*, that is, that it takes place through the forces that are unique to matter *as* such. Instead, it presupposes that to that which is *necessary* in these forces is joined that which is *contingent* and belongs to the foreign influence, which, by *disturbing* the powers of matter, forces them to produce a *specific formation* . . . and this contingency of *Bildung* is expressed through the concept *Bildungstrieb*. (AA 1.6: 253)

It follows that Schelling's conception of contingency differs from Kant's.[45] For Kant, contingency specific to organic formations was relative to our human understanding limited to mechanical explanations. On Kant's view, "the concept of a thing as a natural end is excessive for the determining power of judgment."[46] That is to say that because our human understanding is limited to mechanical explanations (either explaining the whole in terms of the fundamental powers of matter, or as a mechanism determined by some external purpose), organisms remain for us underdetermined and, therefore, from the perspective of our discursive understanding, merely contingent. But for Schelling contingency is nothing relative to the specificities of our understanding, but a causal power outside the forces unique to matter and hence contingent insofar as the events it causes (the disturbance of the balance of powers) would not take place if it were left to the properties of matter itself: "This principle, which is the cause of life, is not the constitutive part [*Bestandtheil*] in the life-process" (AA 1.6: 255). This is because "[t]he essence of life does not consist in a force, but, rather, in a free play of forces which are continuously maintained through an outside influence" (AA 1.6: 254). We already saw that Schelling introduced the concept of life as the free play of forces in his *Ideas*. In the *World-Soul*, the concept of life as a "free play" serves as a ground of the unity of mechanism and organism, of nature that is "free in its blind lawfulness" and "lawful in its freedom" (AA 1.6: 215). According to Kant, a free play of cognitive faculties in aesthetic judgment presupposes a complex conceptual activity (a complex interplay of determinate concepts of the understanding). But this complex conceptual activity excludes the possibility that this wealth of imagination be determined by a specific concept. Analogously, organic formations in nature are subject to nature's mechanical laws, laws that are the object of our discursive understanding. But these laws are not sufficient to explain the origin and functioning of organisms, and, hence, nature is "free in its blind [mechanical] lawfulness." Although the wealth of imagination in a "free play" cannot be determined

[45] Cf. Rang 1988: 175. [46] KU, §74, 05: 396.

by a specific concept, this does not amount to the claim that the "free play" and aesthetic judgment it grounds is non-conceptual. On the contrary, it presupposes a concept, even though an indeterminate one: the principle of purposiveness without a purpose. Similarly, although mechanism is not sufficient for explaining the origin and functioning of an organism, i.e., although the whole of an organism, its regularity, cannot be explained in terms of the motion of its independently existing material parts, this does not imply that its functioning and the connection of its parts is arbitrary. Therefore, nature is "lawful in its freedom."

However, unlike Kant for whom the principle of purposiveness (whether subjective or objective purposiveness) was a regulative principle of the judgment prescribed to its own reflection (so that, given the limitations of our cognitive faculties, it proceeds in its reflection *as if* nature were organized by a mind analogous and more powerful than ours), Schelling conceives of life as a constitutive principle. Put in other words, it is not something we must assume given the limitations of our cognitive faculties, but that which pertains to the object as it is in itself. Moreover, while Kant's principle of purposiveness presupposed, if not existence, a thought of an understanding more powerful and yet analogous to ours, for Schelling the principle of life is an act of nature: "The *necessity* in life is in the universal, but natural forces that are in play; the contingent in life, which through its influence maintains this play, must be a special, that is, in other words, a *material principle*. *Organisation and life* express something that is not at all independent, but only a specific *form* of being" (AA 1.6: 254). In other words, it is nature itself that is the cause of its own individual formations because, as we saw in the passage from Schelling's *Timaeus* commentary, the world-soul is a "material principle." This is also why, for Schelling, the principle of life is an expression of nature's freedom: "Nature should not create itself necessarily; where it is created, nature acts freely; only insofar as the organization is the product of nature in its freedom (of a free play of nature), can nature evoke the ideas of *purposiveness* and only insofar as it evokes these ideas, is nature an *organization*" (AA 1.6: 254). The construction of nature in the *World-Soul*, just as the construction of nature in the *Ideas*, brings mind in nature insofar as nature is represented as a schema of mind's own spontaneity. But going beyond Kant's regulative principle was required to ensure the necessary, and not merely contingent, fit between mind and nature.

But it remains to be seen whether Schelling's ambitions to extend the principles of Kant's critical philosophy and embrace absolute freedom,

i.e., to progress towards freedom not constrained by the separation between mind and nature, leads him nevertheless to a regress and the forms of dogmatism clearly rejected by Kant. In §72 of the Critique of Teleological Power of Judgment, Kant rejects the dogmatic accounts of nature's systematicity: the theories of "**lifeless matter**" (mechanism), "**lifeless God**" (Spinozism), "**living matter**" (hylozoism), and "**living God**" (theism).[47] Schelling continues Kant's critical project insofar as his rejections of mechanism and theism have been clear from the outset.[48] His rejection of hylozoism and Spinozism is self-evident to a lesser degree.

Kant defines hylozoism as a theory according to which "one must either endow matter as mere matter with a property ... that contradicts its essence, or associate with it an alien principle **standing in communion** with it (a soul)."[49] Hylozoism is for Kant "the death of all natural philosophy" because "[i]f we seek the cause of any change of matter in life, we will have to seek it forthwith in another substance, different from matter, yet combined with it."[50] For Schelling, life is clearly not a property of matter because he inherits Kant's dynamic conception of matter and not a conception of matter as a substrate to which properties can be added: "it is the height of anti-philosophy to believe that life must be a property of matter" (AA 1.6: 186). But he also wishes to deny that life is a principle entirely foreign to matter: "It is an old illusion that organization and life cannot be explained out of natural principles. To this it should be added: should the first cause of organic nature be *physically* inscrutable, so this unproved claim would serve nothing but to suppress the courage of the examiner" (AA 1.6: 68). This passage is intended not only as refutation of hylozoism, but also of Kant's view according to which "it would be absurd for humans even to make such an attempt or to hope that there may yet arise a Newton who could make comprehensible even the generation of a blade of grass according to natural laws that no intention has ordered."[51] Although Schelling insists on more rigorous scientific principles than, he thinks, Kant's critical philosophy affords, by insisting that the original cause of life is still a part of nature and an object of our cognition so that we can formulate valid laws that can fully explain relationships of organic formations, his position is not unproblematic. Schelling must account for an ambiguous ontological status of the world-soul or aether (how

[47] KU, §72, Kant AA 05: 392n.
[48] For Schelling's explicit rejections of theism, see the Introduction to the *Ideas*, AA 1.5: 98, 106–7; Schelling 1988a: 34, 41.
[49] KU, §65, Kant AA 05: 374–5.
[50] *Metaphysical Foundations*, AA 04: 544.
[51] KU, §75, Kant AA 05: 400.

something can be a part of nature and somehow ontologically prior to it) and a special causation that somehow escapes the causal nexus that pertains to the forces inherent to dead matter.[52]

For Kant, Spinoza's system is a "system of fatality" because "on this system the connection of ends in the world must be assumed to be unintentional (because it is derived from an original being, but not from its understanding, hence not from any intention on its part, but from the necessity of its nature and the unity of the world flowing from that)."[53] Although a rough parallel can be drawn between, on the one hand, nature's productivity in Schelling and Spinoza's *natura naturans* and Schelling's products of nature (concrete organic formations) and Spinoza's *natura naturata*, Schelling was clearly aware that on Kant's view Spinozism was a threat to the principles of autonomy. Schelling's insistence on contingency, i.e., on the conception of the world-soul as a type of an intentional cause, is his effort to keep the elements of Spinozism in his *Naturphilosophie* without being liable to the Kantian objections of fatalism.

It is in the above-described context that we should approach Schelling's further discussion of higher degrees of matter's self-organization, namely, irritability and sensitivity. Consistent with his transcendental method and his claim that "it is only possible to construct the concept of life . . . from the opposed principles" (AA 1.6: 232), the principle of opposition that was already present in the *Ideas* in the form of the two opposed fundamental forces of matter, Schelling argues that one can "*a priori* deduce" (AA 1.6: 229) the concept of irritability as the "negative" of the process of nutrition (and indirectly also of growth and reproduction as the expressions of the *Bildungstrieb*), that is, as the condition of its possibility. Irritability for Schelling is the animal's drive to move and use its muscles, which he also associates with the process of "deoxidation" or what today we would call a metabolic process of burning calories. And the negative of irritability is sensitivity [*Sensibilität*]. By the latter, Schelling understands the animal's responsiveness to its external environment, which initiates its desire for movement. The concepts of irritability and sensitivity together form the concept of "instinct" [*Instinct*], or "a drive to movement determined by

[52] I would therefore disagree with Beiser who argues that "[i]n seeing matter as only the negative side of life, as its lowest degree of organization and development, Schelling had virtually embraced the very hylozoism Kant had condemned" (Beiser 2002: 521). Beiser's treatment of this issue is more nuanced in Beiser 2006: 13–15.

[53] KU, §72, Kant AA 05: 391–2.

sensibility" (AA 1.6: 249). Instinct represents the "highest synthesis" in which "the arbitrary and non-arbitrary, contingent and necessary of the animal functions are perfectly united" (AA 1.6: 249).

The organization that manifests the highest level of this instinct is the human being because the human form, the spontaneity of human reason, is the closest image of the original *nous* of the world-soul. Moreover, of all the human beings it is genius "in whom the instinct is directed preferably towards that which is great and beautiful." Genius is "a human being [who] cognizes only that towards which he has a drive [*Trieb*] to cognize; it is a futile work to make something easier to understand to human beings if they have no drive to understand it. Thus, in each natural being the manifold finally gathers in *instinct* as all of the enlivened soul, without the urge of which there would never arise a whole, complete in itself" (AA 1.6: 250). Just like in the *Ideas*, so also in *On the World-Soul* Schelling suggests that the creativity of a genius, and primarily (as suggested in the passage above) of a philosophical genius, is the most concrete manifestation of nature's original creativity.

The principle of life is responsible for constantly upsetting the fundamental balance of forces, maintaining them in motion, thus, ensuring nature's constant productivity. But if the principle of life is responsible for constantly maintaining the opposition and movement of the fundamental forces, it is not clear what explains their arrest in a specific organic form as well as the re-emergence of the conflict of the forces. Schelling addresses this issue in the *First Outline* (1799).

V *The First Outline*: On the way to the System of Identity

In the Introduction to the *First Outline*, Schelling offers clear traces of an organized philosophical system. He opens his Introduction by specifying the place of *Naturphilosophie* in his system of knowledge:

> The intelligence is in a twofold way either productive as blind and unconscious or as free and with self-consciousness; unconsciously productive in the world outlook and with self-consciousness in the creation of an ideal world. Philosophy sublates this opposition so that it assumes that the unconscious activity is originally identical and as if it were sprouted from the same root as the conscious activity: this identity philosophy proves *directly* in one decisive, at the same time conscious and unconscious activity, which expresses itself in the products of *genius*; *indirectly* out of self-consciousness in the products of *nature* insofar as in all of them the fusion of the ideal and real is perceived. (AA 1.8: 29)

The former method belongs to *Transzendentalphilosophie* and the latter to *Naturphilosophie*. Although both assume the original identity of the conscious and the unconscious, the former "subordinates" (AA 1.8: 30) the real, the unconscious activity to the ideal, self-consciousness, insofar as it ends in the products of genius which are the "document" (AA 1.9: 328) or evidence brought before the self-consciousness of the original unity. The latter "explains the ideal from the real," and hence subordinates the former to the latter, insofar as the lawfulness and regularity in nature, the ideal, is explained in terms of the unconscious, "although to the self-conscious originally related productivity," manifested in nature as a blind "drive" [*Trieb*] (AA 1.8: 30). While the real aspect of the philosophical system represents nature as "Mind made visible," the ideal aspect represents mind as "the invisible Nature" (AA 1.5: 107; Schelling 1988a: 42). Schelling develops the subjective, ideal, aspect of the system in his 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism* and the objective, real, aspect is his *Naturphilosophie*. They are both equally "necessary" as they illuminate the same subject from two different perspectives.

Now that Schelling has reached a clear relation between *Transzendental-* and *Naturphilosophie* and, moreover, allocated the function of genius to the former and not to the latter, we can assume that in the *First Outline* he is already committed to the view of the 1800 *System*, namely, that "genius is possible only in the arts" (Schelling 1978: 222) and that the intellectual intuition of a philosopher in Transcendental Philosophy is subordinated to the aesthetic intuition of the artistic genius. This is because the theories and constructions of the former lack the objective reality of the work of the latter. But how are we to think of the constructions of the philosopher of nature in the *First Outline* and how do they compare to the constructions of the philosopher of nature in the *Ideas* and *On the World-Soul*?

While in the earlier writings on *Naturphilosophie* Schelling suggests that natural science with its own methodology can only build on the results of *Naturphilosophie* and its specific method of construction, it is for the first time in the *First Outline* that he makes experiment into a necessary element of the metaphysical construction of nature. But, according to Schelling, each experiment is "a question addressed to nature that she is forced to answer" and furthermore "each question contains a hidden a priori judgment" (AA 1.8: 33). This a priori judgment is a hypothesis, which even if it is the "absolute presupposition" about the universal duality as the ultimate principle of all scientific explanation, requires an experiment as a confirmation of its truthfulness: "if all natural phenomena cannot be derived from this presupposition, when in the entire system of

nature there is one single appearance that is not necessary according to this principle or if it contradicts the same, then the presupposition is false, it stops being a principle from that moment" (AA 1.8: 35). Thus, on the one hand, the philosopher of nature does not proceed entirely discursively (as an experimental physicist who is only focused on mechanical causation) because he approaches nature as an organic whole that is metaphysically prior to its parts. But, on the other hand, his insight into the ultimate principle out of which this organic whole is created requires an experiment in order to confirm its truthfulness. How can this tension in Schelling's method be reconciled?

Schelling found a possible solution to this tension, I contend, in Kant's conception of a talented artist, an imitator of nature. A talented artist, in contrast to the genius of *Transzendentalphilosophie*, who provides a "direct" proof of the original unity of the conscious and unconscious (freedom and nature), offers an "indirect" proof of the same unity. For Kant, the artist who imitates retrospectively attempts to capture some essential aspect of the rule manifested in the works of a genius. In imitation, thus, "the rule [*Regel*] must be abstracted from the deed, i.e., from the product, against which others may test their own talent."[54] Similarly, Schelling's *Naturphilosoph* observes nature and its formations and "retrospectively" in her philosophical constructions attempts to abstract the rule or principle of nature's own self-construction and constantly judges the correctness of her abstraction through experimentation. According to Kant, a genius does not learn through imitation how to give her work a purposive form. Rather, a genius creates, which, for Kant, is to say that "nature gives the rule [*Regel*]" to the work of a genius.[55] Thus, for Schelling, a genius-artist of *Transzendentalphilosophie* creates according to the principle or rule of nature's own self-construction and thus offers a "direct" proof of the original unity of the conscious and the unconscious. But a talented artist who proceeds by "imitation" [*Nachahmung*] must distinguish herself from someone with no artistic talent who proceeds by blind, mechanical replication of the pattern of composition, or "copying" [*Nachmachen*]. The imitator has a capacity to grasp the original rule of genius at least in its form by continuing to produce in the style or school of the original master, which differentiates her as a talented artist from someone who is merely skillful and proceeds mechanically.[56]

Schelling's construction of nature in the *First Outline* begins with his more radically altered Kantian conception of the construction of matter.

[54] KU, Kant AA 05: 309. [55] KU, Kant AA 05: 307. [56] See Ostaric 2012b: 78–9, 94.

Schelling argues that Kant's concept of the construction of matter out of two opposed forces is sufficient in mechanism, the object of outer sense in general, but not for the explanation of the "formation [*Bildung*] even of one single matter" (AA 1.7: 141) with its specific differences.[57] Instead, in the construction of matter we must start from an assumption that there is an original "infinitely-productive activity [*unendlich-productive Thätigkeit*]" conceived as a "constant duplicity in identity [*beständige Duplicität in der Identität*]" (AA 1.8: 42) that in the next step manifests itself as "the original separation [*ursprüngliche Entzweyung*]" (AA 1.8: 44) and alternation of the fundamental forces of expansion and contraction. This original productivity of nature contains in itself a retardation, the force of gravity, which in the finite products of nature freezes in the "state of indifference [*Indifferenz*]" its original activity, a phenomenon Schelling did not have the resources to explain in his earlier writings. The original construction of matter must be repeated at higher levels because matter as a product of nature in general fails to restore the infinity of the original identity and, hence, is a "seeming product" [*Scheinproduct*] (AA 1.8: 46). In the second stage, the process is repeated at a higher level as positive and negative poles of magnetic phenomena (which corresponds to the "duplicity in identity" of the initial stage), and subsequently as the separate and mutually external forces of electricity (which corresponds to the "original separation" and polarity of the initial stage), and finally, in the chemical process that produces fluids and gasses, the forces unite again reaching the "state of indifference." The process repeats itself at yet another, higher level: no longer at the level of inorganic, but organic formations, which do not again fully exhaust the original infinite productivity of nature, but objectify it more closely because organisms produce and reproduce themselves infinitely just like nature. Thus, while inorganic nature is nature in its first potency, organic nature is nature in its higher, second potency (AA 1.8: 59). The original "duplicity of identity" manifests itself again in the excitability of an organism to its external environment, which is further the condition of irritability, movement, or alternation of contraction and expansion with which the organism reacts to the external environment and that corresponds to the polarity of independent and opposed forces on the initial level of the construction of nature. Finally, the moment of

[57] We saw in section II above that Kant accounts for the specific differences in matter through its quality. Hence, Schelling's objection is not justified and, instead, reflects his own philosophical agenda, that is, a more *Geist*-oriented interpretation of matter according to which nature is conceived as an aspect of mind.

indifference in which the opposed forces are again reconciled is the "formative drive" or the "drive to production." This point of "indifference" [*Indifferenz*] is only temporary and is upset in the productivity of the organism, namely, its reproduction, which is nature's third potency.[58] Because organic nature never ceases to reproduce, Schelling then claims that the phenomenal nature is a constant "striving" [*Streben*] to recover the original identity.

With this, Schelling's transcendental method remains only in his language, i.e., the language of explaining each step in the construction of nature as a "condition of a possibility" of the preceding one. But the re-emergence of the opposition (which guarantees the continuation of nature's production) and the arrest of the interplay of forces in final products are guaranteed by the nature of the original identity. Thus, conceptually, if not in the actual language, the *First Outline* anticipates Schelling's construction of nature as the process of unfolding or evolving of the preexisting order of the original identity in his System of Identity.

VI Conclusion

We have seen that the early Schelling's aim to demonstrate the necessary correspondence between mind and nature presupposes a method of construction that relies on a philosopher's non-discursive, intuitive cognition of the principle of life, which transcends both mind and nature, and is the unifying ground of both. In the *First Outline*, Schelling himself, it seems, identifies as problematic the fact that natural science should be based on *Naturphilosophie*, the object of which is the cognition of a principle that is in no need of systematic justification and the fact that this cognition depends on a contingent event in human history, the occurrence of a philosophical genius. To claim that natural science should depend on a contingent event in human history compromises the possibility of a scientific progress. This is the reason why Schelling in the *First Outline* no longer suggests that philosophical construction of nature requires a

[58] In the *First Outline*, Schelling refers to organic formations in nature as an "analogue of reason" [*Analogon der Vernunft*] (AA 1.8: 31). Thus, by using Kant's concept "analogon" (See KrV, A674/B702, where Kant refers to the ideas of reason as that which "should be grounded only as analogues of real things, but not as things in themselves") Schelling claims that organisms themselves are not rational, but that insofar as they constantly objectify their own productivity in their own reproduction (they are the cause and effect of themselves), their activity is analogous to rational activity that constantly objectifies its own spontaneity in the form of self-consciousness. See also AA 1.5: 215; Schelling 1988a: 177.

philosophical genius and why he incorporates experimentation into the method of construction, suggesting that the philosopher of nature after all requires nature's confirmation of the truth of the philosopher's cognition that was in his initial writings characterized by self-evidence. But if Schelling's solution in the *First Outline* subdued his much stronger dogmatic claims in the *Ideas* and the *World-Soul*, it brought forth a new problem, namely, the conception of science as a body of knowledge not grounded on self-evident and absolutely necessary principles.

CHAPTER 4

Knowledge and pleasure in the aesthetics of Schelling

Paul Guyer

I Introduction

In his *System of Transcendental Idealism*, Friedrich Schelling claimed a centrality for aesthetic experience in philosophy itself that was, if not entirely novel, then like nothing in the history of philosophy since Socrates' impassioned speech about the significance of beauty in the *Symposium*. At the same time, Schelling expounded his aesthetic theory using much of the terminology of Kant's aesthetics. Kant's philosophy of fine art constituted a unique synthesis of a novel theory, the theory that the intrinsically pleasurable free play of our mental powers is the essence of aesthetic experience that was developed in mid-eighteenth-century Scotland and Germany, with the theory that aesthetic experience is a distinctive form of the apprehension of truth that had been the core of aesthetic theory since the time of Aristotle. Kant had brought these two strands of aesthetic theory together in his conception of "aesthetic ideas" as the source of "spirit" in fine art and of genius as the uniquely artistic capacity for the creation and communication of aesthetic ideas, for by means of this concept he postulated that in both the production and the reception of fine art the imagination freely plays with and around the intellectual content furnished by ideas of reason. If Schelling had adopted the substance of Kant's aesthetics along with its terminology, his work would have continued Kant's synthesizing approach to aesthetics. However, Kant's synthesis of the new aesthetics of free play with the ancient cognitivist tradition in aesthetics, like so many others among the delicate balancing acts that comprised Kant's philosophy, was quickly sundered by his successors beginning with Schelling, who rejected Kant's combination of the aesthetics of play with the aesthetics of truth in favor of a purely cognitivist approach to aesthetics. Schelling transformed Kant's conception of aesthetic ideas as a form of free play with truth back into a more traditional conception of an apprehension of truth that is certainly

different from other forms of cognition, but does not really involve an element of free play. In rejecting Kant's idea that aesthetic experience is intrinsically pleasurable because it is a free play of our mental powers, Schelling also adopted the view that, for the most part, aesthetic experience is pleasurable only because it releases us from the pain of some otherwise inescapable contradiction in the human condition – to borrow terms used by Edmund Burke a half-century earlier, he replaced Kant's conception of aesthetic response as a "positive pleasure" with a conception of it as "the removal of pain" or "delight" as a merely "negative" or "relative" form of pleasure.[1] In one final twist to the story of the relation between Kant's and Hegel's aesthetics, in his slightly later lectures on *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, Schelling backs away from the bold claim of *The System of Transcendental Idealism* that art is the highest form of philosophy – but does not return to the Kantian conception of the centrality of free play to all forms of aesthetic experience.

II Kant

Kant's own aesthetic theorizing had begun from the challenge posed by mid-century aesthetic theory, for example, by Hume's essay "Of the Standard of Taste" (1757): to explain how a judgment of taste, paradigmatically a judgment that a particular object is beautiful, can be made only on the basis of a feeling of pleasure in response to an object, independent of any determinate concept of that object, and yet can be universally valid, that is, valid for all qualified observers of the object responding to it under appropriate conditions.[2] Kant presents this challenge not as one raised by philosophers but as one raised by common sense and practice, which recognizes that it would be "ridiculous" for someone to call beautiful that which he supposes is pleasing just to him.[3] He begins by accepting from the third Earl of Shaftesbury and Francis Hutcheson that a judgment of taste must be disinterested, independent of any personal physiological, prudential, or moral interest in the existence of the object. But disinterestedness is merely a necessary condition for universal validity: one's pleasure in an object might be independent of any identifiable interest, and yet still be idiosyncratic. To find a sufficient condition for the universal validity of

[1] Burke 1958, Part One, Sections III–V: 33–36.
[2] An abbreviated version of this section has previously appeared in Guyer 2008: 165–7; that article is reprinted in Neill and Janaway 2009: 11–25.
[3] KU, §7, Kant AA 05: 212.

the judgment of taste, Kant seeks its ground in a mental state that is free from regulation by determinate concepts, but that nevertheless can be reasonably expected from all normal human beings who can themselves approach the object without an antecedent interest in or preconception of what the object ought to be. This state Kant claims to find in the "free play" of the imagination and understanding in response to an object, an "apprehension of forms" in which "the imagination . . . is unintentionally brought into accord with the understanding . . . and a feeling of pleasure is thereby aroused,"[4] a "state of mind" in which the "powers of representation that are set into play by [a] representation are hereby in a free play, since no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition,"[5] or, as he also describes it, a state of the "animation [*Belebung*] of both faculties (the imagination and the understanding) to an activity that is indeterminate but yet, through the stimulus of the given representation, in unison [*einhelliger*]."[6] Such a state of mind is pleasurable because it seems to us like the satisfaction of our general goal in cognition – finding unity in our manifolds of representation – in a way that is contingent and surprising precisely because it is not dictated by any concept that applies to the object.[7] But it also is a response to the object that we can impute to others as what they too would experience (under optimal conditions), because it involves nothing but cognitive powers which themselves must be imputed to others and assumed to work in the same way in them as they do in ourselves "as the necessary condition of the universal communicability of our cognition, which is assumed in every logic and every principle of cognitions that is not skeptical."[8] This inference is what Kant calls the "deduction of judgments of taste."

Now Kant insists that the universal validity claimed by judgments of taste does not rest on merely "psychological observations,"[9] but is grounded on an "*a priori* principle,"[10] although he makes no explicit argument that we can know a priori that the free play of our cognitive powers will produce a feeling of pleasure[11] and his assumption that we can know a priori that the cognitive powers of others must work like our own

[4] KU, Introduction, section VII, Kant AA 05: 190. [5] KU, §9, Kant AA 05: 217.
[6] KU, §9, Kant AA 05: 219. [7] See KU, Introduction, section VI, Kant AA 05: 187–8.
[8] KU, §21, Kant AA 05: 239; cf. §38, Kant AA 05: 290. [9] Kant AA 05: 239.
[10] KU, §36, Kant AA 05: 288.
[11] Indeed, in the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant had argued that the feeling of *respect* is the only feeling that can be known (in some way) a priori to occur; see the chapter "On the incentives of pure practical reason," Kant AA 05: 73.

even when not determined by particular concepts is debatable.[12] In the "Dialectic of the Aesthetic Power of Judgment" Kant restates the challenge of justifying the judgment of taste's claim to universal validity in the form of an "antinomy" between the "thesis" that "The judgment of taste is not based on concepts, for otherwise it would be possible to dispute about it (decide by means of proofs)" and the "antithesis" that the "judgment of taste is based on concepts, for otherwise . . . it would not even be possible to argue about it (to lay claim to the necessary assent of others to this judgment)."[13] However, instead of then reiterating his previous solution to this dilemma, that the judgment of taste is based on a free play of cognitive powers that can be assumed to work the same way in everybody (under ideal conditions), Kant next argues that "all contradiction vanishes if I say that [determining ground of] the judgment of taste . . . may lie in the concept of that which can be regarded as the supersensible substratum of humanity,"[14] the noumenal basis of our phenomenal, psychological powers that must be the same in all human beings. This assertion relocates the explanation of the intersubjective validity of judgments of taste from the psychological (whether transcendental or empirical) theory of the free play of the cognitive powers to a metaphysical theory of a common but noumenal and therefore inaccessible ground of the phenomenal psychologies of all human beings. How Kant might have thought he could assert that the noumenal ground of all human psychologies must be the same when he ordinarily maintains that our concept of our noumenal selves (in this like our concept of God) can be made determinate only through the *moral* law is unclear.[15]

Kant uses his idea of the free play of the cognitive faculties but not that of the supersensible ground of that state of mind in his theory of fine art and its source in genius. Kant defines art in general as the human power to produce a work through freedom rather than mere instinct and through skill rather than science, and then distinguishes "liberal" art from mere handicraft as an intrinsically agreeable rather than merely remunerative occupation.[16] "Aesthetic art" aims to produce a feeling of pleasure in its audience as well, either through mere sensation, in which case it is "agreeable" art, or as "a kind of representation that is purposive in itself and, though without an end, nevertheless promotes the cultivation of the

[12] I have dealt with this issue at length in Guyer 1997, chs. 7–9. For a defense of Kant's deduction of taste, see Allison 2001a, ch. 8.
[13] KU, §56, Kant AA 05: 338–9.
[14] KU, §57, Kant AA 05: 340.
[15] See *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant AA 05: 49. For a defense of Kant's attempt to provide a noumenal foundation for the assumption of the commonality of taste, see Dobe 2010.
[16] KU, §43, Kant AA 05: 303–4.

mental powers for sociable communication," in which case it is "beautiful" art.[17] Kant may initially seem to suggest that in order to appreciate beautiful art as such one may have to suppress one's knowledge that it is the product of intentional human production: "the purposiveness of its form must still seem to be as free from all constraint by arbitrary rules as if it were a mere product of nature."[18] But as he continues, he makes it clear that beautiful art produces a free play of our cognitive powers precisely because its form engages and unifies our imagination in a way that *goes beyond* whatever determinate concepts – concepts of its goal, its medium and genre, and its content – that we do know apply to it.[19] This is the lesson of Kant's conception of genius as the source of art and of "aesthetic ideas" as what the artistic genius produces.

Beautiful art must be produced by genius because "The concept of beautiful art . . . does not allow the judgment concerning the beauty of its product to be derived from any sort of rule that has a **concept** for its determining ground," and genius is precisely the "talent (natural gift)" for "producing that for which no determinate rule can be given, not a predisposition of skill for that which can be learned in accordance with some rule."[20] Beautiful art, Kant also says, must contain "spirit," so genius must be responsible for the spirit in art. Kant then explicates spirit in terms of the concept of aesthetic ideas. Spirit, he says, is the "animating principle in the mind" in the production and experience of beautiful art, and that "by which this principle animates the soul . . . is that which purposively sets the mental powers into motion, i.e., into a play that is self-sustaining and even strengthens the powers to that end."[21] What sets the mental powers into such a play, Kant then continues, is an aesthetic idea, "that representation of the imagination that occasions much thinking though without it being possible for any determinate thought, i.e., **concept**, to be adequate to it, which, consequently, no language fully attains or can make intelligible." What Kant means by this is that a work of art on the one hand has intellectual content, specifically *rational* content, a content of ideas that cannot be reduced to determinate concepts of the understanding, but on the other hand conveys this content through a wealth of materials of the imagination that cannot be derived from that content by any rule but that nevertheless illustrate it and convey it to us in a satisfyingly harmonious and therefore pleasurable way. Thus he says that "One can call such

[17] KU, §44, Kant AA 05: 305–6. [18] KU, §45, Kant AA 05: 306.
[19] This is what I call the "meta-cognitive" character of Kant's aesthetic theory; see Guyer 2005.
[20] KU, §46, Kant AA 05: 307. [21] KU, §49, Kant AA 05: 313.

representations of the imagination **ideas**: on the one hand because they at least strive toward something lying beyond the bounds of experience, and thus seek to approximate a presentation of concepts of reason (of intellectual ideas) . . . ; on the other hand, and indeed principally, because no concept can be fully adequate to them, as inner intuitions. The poet ventures to make sensible rational ideas of invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, the kingdom of hell, eternity, creations, etc."[22] Genius is then the capacity for the "exposition or the expression of **aesthetic ideas**," the ability to present rational ideas in imaginative ways that cannot be fully determined by any rules, even though the media and genres of art do have their technical rules. And Kant stresses that genius consists not just in the capacity to create such ideas for oneself but also in the capacity to find ways to communicate them to others: "thus genius really consists in the happy relation, which no science can teach and no diligence learn, of finding ideas for a given concept on the one hand and on the other hitting upon the **expression** for these, through which the subjective disposition of the mind that is thereby produced" in the artist "can be communicated to others," namely the audience for art.[23] This in turn means that the genius must have the special gift of not only enjoying the free play of his own mental powers but also stimulating the free play of these powers in others, so that they may not simply apprehend the object he has produced but, paradoxical as it may sound, enjoy a free play similar to his own and thus be stimulated but not dominated by his artistic success. Kant does not make this point explicit in any extended discussion of the relation between artists and their audiences, but does imply it in a discussion of the relation between artists of genius and their artistic successors: the latter must not "ape" their master but must instead be stimulated by his originality to develop their own.[24] The work of a genius must be "exemplary" originality[25] that stimulates the free play of the mental powers of its audience in general and of successive artists in particular.

In his theory of aesthetic ideas and genius, then, Kant synthesizes the old and the new approaches to aesthetic experience: beautiful art (and Kant subsequently extends this to beautiful nature)[26] conveys important ideas, indeed in some way makes sensible or palpable the most profound ideas of reason that cannot be fully grasped through ordinary concepts of the understanding, but our pleasure in art does not come from our cognition of these ideas as such but from the free play between these ideas and the

[22] KU, §49, Kant AA 05: 314. [23] KU, §49, Kant AA 05: 317. [24] Kant AA 05: 318.
[25] KU, §46, Kant AA 05: 308. [26] KU, §51, Kant AA 05: 320.

form and matter of the works by which they are conveyed, thus from the free play of our imagination with these ideas rather than from mere cognition of them. In aesthetic experience, our cognitive powers are engaged with cognitions, but not for the sake or to the end of cognition. Kant maintains this delicate position in the final piece of his aesthetic theory, the theory that "the beautiful is the symbol of the morally good, and also that only in this respect (that of a relation that is natural to everyone, and that is also expected of everyone else as a duty) does it please with a claim to the assent of everyone else." Here Kant argues that the beautiful may and indeed ought to be taken as a symbol of the morally good because of a number of analogies between our experience of the beautiful and our moral experience, above all the analogy between "the **freedom** of the imagination ... in the judging of the beautiful" and "the freedom of the will ... as the agreement of the latter with itself in accordance with universal laws of reason" in "moral judgment."[27] But Kant does not say that our experience of the freedom of the imagination in the experience of beauty gives us actual knowledge of the freedom of our will. That, he has argued in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, can come only from our immediate awareness of our obligation under the moral law, the "fact of reason."[28] Aesthetic experience can at most give us a *feeling* of our freedom rather than *cognition* of it, although it is apparently sufficiently important that we have even a mere feeling of our freedom that we can demand the attention of others to the beautiful objects that give this feeling to us and their assent to our judgments of taste about them.

Schelling draws on all of these ideas. But he also turns Kant's idea of the free play of our cognitive powers back into the more traditional idea that aesthetic experience is actual cognition, and further treats such cognition primarily as a source of the negative pleasure of relief from pain rather than as a source of positive pleasure presupposing no antecedent pain. Let us now see how he does that.

III The background to Schelling's aesthetics

In his 1800 *System of Transcendental Idealism*, the work that made his fame at twenty-five and may still be his mostly widely read work, Schelling asserted that

[27] KU, §59, Kant AA 05: 353–4. [28] Kant AA 05: 30, 47–9.

> Art is at once the only true and eternal organon and document of philosophy, which ever and again continues to speak to us of what philosophy cannot depict in external form, namely the unconscious element in acting and producing, and its original idea with the conscious. Art is paramount to the philosopher precisely because it opens to him, as it were, the holy of holies, where burns in eternal and original unity, as if in a single flame, that which in nature and history is rent asunder, and in life and action, no less than in thought, must forever fly apart. (StI, Schelling 1978: 231)[29]

Schelling rapidly revised this claim, arguing in his lectures on *The Philosophy of Art* just a couple of years later (1802–3) that philosophy is more parallel to art than subordinated to it, expressing in abstract or "ideal" form the same ultimate content that art expresses in more concrete or "real" form (Schelling 1989b: 6). But it is obvious that the aesthetic theory of a philosopher who could make either of these claims cannot be well understood except as part of a much larger system. I will say just enough about Schelling's whole system at the time of his two most influential works on art to allow us to see how he transformed Kant's theory of the free play of our cognitive powers in aesthetic experience back into a theory of aesthetic experience as itself a form of cognition, and how he replaced Kant's positive view of the pleasure of aesthetic experience with an essentially negative view of it.

Schelling's *System of Transcendental Idealism* of 1800 completed his first philosophical system, in which he presented the parallel disciplines of Philosophy of Nature and Transcendental Philosophy as coinciding and culminating in the philosophy of art. In this system, written in response to Fichte's radicalization of Kant's original transcendental idealism by the replacement of the thing in itself with the self's own "positing" of its other, Schelling argued that the laws of nature on the one hand are the product of unconscious thought and the laws of human knowledge and action (including institutions) on the other are the product of conscious thought, while only art, as the product of both unconscious and conscious thought, reveals the unitary and active character of the thought that underlies all reality. That art reveals this is precisely why it is essentially cognitive, and that only art fully reveals this is why it is more cognitively valuable than even philosophy, which manifests more the conscious than the unconscious aspect of thought. Schelling expounded his Philosophy of Nature in two early works, the *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* of 1797 and the *First*

[29] Quotations from Schelling 1978, occasionally modified (here I have translated Schelling's *Organon* as "organon" rather than "organ"). See Schelling 1957: 297.

Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature of 1799, and continued to expound it in works subsequent to the *System of Transcendental Idealism* as well.[30] But this brief review of the Philosophy of Nature from the Introduction to the latter work captures Schelling's central idea:

> If all *knowing* has as it were two poles that mutually presuppose and demand one another . . . there must necessarily be *two* basic sciences . . . The necessary tendency of all *natural science* is . . . the move from nature to the intelligent . . . The highest consummation of natural science would be the complete spiritualizing of all natural laws into laws of intuition and thought. The phenomena (the matter) must wholly disappear, and only the laws (the form) remain. Hence it is, that the more lawfulness emerges in nature itself, the more the husk disappears, the phenomena themselves become more mental, and at length vanish entirely. (StI, Schelling 1978: 6)

Schelling illustrates this claim with the examples of optics, which he claims is "nothing but a geometry whose lines are drawn by light," which is of itself "of doubtful materiality"; of magnetism, in which "all material traces are already disappearing"; and of gravitation, "which even scientists have thought it possible to conceive of merely as an immediate spiritual influence," of which "nothing remains but its law" (StI, Schelling 1978: 6). No doubt the contemporary reader will object that the fact that the most general and fundamental laws of natural science can only be *grasped* by abstract acts of the human intellect hardly *makes* them into abstract acts of intellect in any sense, but this objection does not move an idealist who is committed to the claim that knowledge is possible only because of the underlying identity of the knower and the known:

> How both the objective world accommodates to representations in us, and representations in us to the objective world, is unintelligible unless between the two worlds, the ideal and the real, there exists a *predetermined harmony*. But this latter is unthinkable unless the activity, whereby the objective is produced, is at bottom identical with that which expresses itself in volition, and *vice versa*. (StI, Schelling 1978: 11–12)

Like Kant, Schelling thought that Leibniz's central idea of a pre-established harmony between representations and objects had to be revised, but instead of transforming it into a regulative principle, as Kant ultimately did, Schelling sought a metaphysical foundation for it in the essentially mental nature of reality itself. After 1800, in his so-called Identity Philosophy, he would turn more to Spinoza for inspiration, explaining

[30] Schelling 1988a; Schelling 2004; Schelling, *System der gesammten Philosophie und der Naturphilosophie insbesondere* (1804), AS 02: 141–588.

the possibility of the cognitive correspondence between thought and nature by the metaphysical theory that they are both manifestations of an underlying absolute which is expressed in each. That change actually has only minor impact on the content of his philosophy of art, although it has perhaps greater impact on his assessment of the philosophical significance of our aesthetic experience.

So much for the Philosophy of Nature; on the other side, Transcendental Philosophy proceeds "from the subjective, as primary and absolute," to the objective that arises from this (StI, Schelling 1978: 7), that is, it studies how the indisputably subjective structures of human thought manifest or objectify themselves in human discourses and sciences, human actions and institutions. Here Schelling introduces a historical dimension, holding that human thought is actually "a *graduated sequence* of intuitions, whereby the self raises itself to the highest power of consciousness," and thus that Transcendental Philosophy must take the form of "a progressive history of self-consciousness, for which what is laid down in experience serves merely, so to speak, as a memorial and a document" (StI, Schelling 1978: 2). In these two brief comments, two important features of Schelling's thought are revealed. First, again revealing a preference for Leibniz over Kant, Schelling suggests that human thought takes the form of a gradual transition from intuitions to concepts, from more concrete to more abstract forms of thought, rather than that of a synthesis of intuitions and concepts that are fundamentally different in kind; second, his claim that experience serves merely as a memorial and document of self-consciousness suggests that even with such things as human sciences and institutions, which are more obviously the products of thought than are magnetism or gravitation, we are not always *self*-conscious, that is, conscious that these are in fact the products of our own thought, and that we need philosophy to make us conscious of that fact.

But it is central to Schelling's philosophy that even the products of human thought are never solely the products of conscious or self-conscious thought and intention, or voluntary actions, but always reflect unconscious thought and intentions as well. This fundamental fact is what, for the Schelling of 1800, art and only art reveals, and revealing that is the essentially cognitive function of art.

IV Schelling's aesthetics in the *System of Transcendental Idealism*

To prepare the way for his apotheosis of the role of art in the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, Schelling combines his Philosophy of Nature and

his Transcendental Philosophy into the thesis that all nature, our own included, is the product of both unconscious and conscious thought, and that there is something contradictory about this. The contradiction is, or better, the contradictions are, that the one and the same continuous process of thinking should be both unconscious and conscious, that it should be both ideal and real, that is, take the form of both mental representation and external object of representation, and that it should be both infinite and finite, that is, like a general concept that applies to indeterminately many objects and like a particular object to which a general concept applies. What we commonly call nature tends to line up with one side of these contrasts and what we commonly call thought with the other, but for Schelling we must be able to understand both sides of these contrasts as present in each of what we artificially distinguish as nature and thought. He argues that we can do this in two ways: first, inadequately, in a teleological view of nature which finds a way to incorporate not merely thought but also volition in our conception of nature, and then, more fully, in art, which we can experience as both a natural and an intentional product of both unconscious and conscious thought.

The task for uniting the two forms of thought conceived by Schelling to underlie nature on the one hand and our own knowledge and action on the other is to find something that makes manifest the "original identity of the conscious with the unconscious activity" (StI, Schelling 1978: 214). He adds to Kant's characterization of teleological judgment his own identification of that which is conscious with that which is intentional or purposive, and that which is unconscious with that which is unintentional, in order to argue that the first form in which this identity is manifest is nature judged teleologically: "But now if all conscious activity is purposive, this coincidence of conscious and unconscious activity can evidence itself only in a product that is *purposive*, without *being purposively brought about*" (StI, Schelling 1978: 213–14). He does not reproduce Kant's argument that it is only the peculiar characteristics of organisms that forces us to conceive of them as if they were internally purposive systems, a conception which leads us to think of nature as a whole as if it were a purposive system for which we have to conceive of both an author and a final end, a purpose for the system as a whole.[31] He just helps himself to the assumption that nature in general presents itself to us "as a product, that is, which although it is the work of unseeing mechanism, yet looks as though it were consciously brought about," or that it seems to us as if "in its mechanism, and although

[31] See KU, §67.

itself nothing but a blind mechanism," nature "is nonetheless purposive" (StI, Schelling 1978: 215). But Schelling is also insistent that such a view of nature does not by itself reveal any connection between the purposiveness of nature and our *own* thought: "Nature, in its blind and mechanical purposiveness, admittedly represents to me an original identity of the conscious and unconscious activities, but it does not present this identity to me as one whose ultimate ground resides *in the self itself*" (StI, Schelling 1978: 217). Something else must make manifest that the intellect that emerges unconsciously and non-purposively in nature is in fact identical with our own conscious and purposive thought. Only art reveals that.

Schelling is looking for an intuition that "is to bring together that which exists separately in the appearance of freedom and in the intuition of the natural product, namely *identity of the conscious*, and the *unconscious* in the *self*, and *consciousness of this identity*" (StI, Schelling 1978: 219). Drawing now on Kant's conception of genius as the gift of nature that allows an artist to create an object that can suggest a harmony between imagination and understanding that goes beyond anything implied by the determinate concepts that guide the intentional and voluntary aspects of the artist's creative process, Schelling finds this identity in the work of art: "With the product of freedom, our product will have this in common, that it is consciously brought about; and with the product of nature, that it is unconsciously brought about" (StI, Schelling 1978: 219). A work of artistic genius is indisputably a product of human thought and human intentional action, yet at the same time it exceeds the conscious intentions of the artist in a way that must be attributed to nature, but to nature working with and through the conscious thoughts of the artist to determine the complete form, matter, and content of the object, and thus to unconscious as well as conscious thought. Further, in the work of art both the conscious and unconscious thought that begin within the artist typically result in an object that seems to exist independently of the artist but of course could not have come to exist without the artist; so what ordinarily may seem to be the insuperable gap between thought and object is bridged, and the underlying identity of thought in both thinker and object is made manifest. Schelling sums all this up in the statements that "This unchanging identity, which can never attain to consciousness, and merely radiates back from the product, is for the producer precisely what destiny is for the agent, namely a dark unknown force which supplies the element of completeness or objectivity to the piecework of freedom, and ... is denominated by means of the obscure concept of *genius*," while "The product we postulate is none other than the product of genius, or, since

genius is possible only in the arts,[32] the *product of art*" (StI, Schelling 1978: 222).

Schelling does not pause in the crowning but brief final section of the *System of Transcendental Idealism* to persuade his reader of this analysis of the nature of artistic genius and its product by applying it to any examples; that deficiency he will make up for – in spades – in the lectures on *The Philosophy of Art*. But he does argue that in being experienced to resolve the alleged contradiction between the description of one and the same thing as both conscious and unconscious, voluntary and involuntary, the work of art will be experienced with an "infinite satisfaction" or "tranquility":

> The intelligence will therefore end with a complete recognition of the identity expressed in the product as an identity whose principle lies in the intelligence itself; it will end, that is, in a complete intuiting of itself. Now since it was the free tendency to self-intuition in that identity which originally divided the intelligence from itself, the feeling accompanying this intuition will be that of an infinite satisfaction [*Befriedigung*]. With the completion of the product, all urge to produce is halted, all contradictions are eliminated, all riddles are resolved . . . The intelligence will feel itself astonished and *blessed* [*beglückt*] by this union, will regard it, that is, in the light of a bounty freely granted by a higher nature . . . (StI, Schelling 1978: 221)

For Schelling, the experience of art pleases because it resolves what is supposed to be a troubling paradox: this is the pleasure of relief from pain, or negative pleasure. Far from being an active, positive pleasure, this pleasure is experienced as a gift from without, something that we passively receive rather than ourselves produce, and it does not stimulate any one – audience or successive artists – to activity but rather stills all "urge to produce." It is passive as well as negative.

Schelling has thus transformed Kant's account of our positive pleasure in our free play with our own cognitive powers into an account of relief from pain in the insight into the resolution of the fundamental paradox of metaphysics. Kant's idea that the imagination and the understanding are in harmony in aesthetic creation and experience has been transformed into the idea that unconscious and involuntary thought and conscious and voluntary thought reveal their identity in the work of art, but in that transformation the element of free play has been lost, the creativity of the

[32] On this point Schelling apparently just accepts Kant's position (KU, §47, Kant AA 05: 308–9), which was opposed to the position of Alexander Gerard that genius manifests itself in both natural science and the fine arts, although of course in specifically different ways; see Gerard 1774, Part III.

imagination has been turned into metaphysical insight, and the positive feeling of life and activity that is the heart of Kant's account has been transformed into relief at the revelation of the solution to a theoretical problem.

The account considered so far concerns primarily the cognitive content of aesthetic experience in the artist and the audience for a work of art and the affective dimension of that cognition. Schelling also offers brief accounts of the paradigmatic general categories of the objects of such experience, namely beauty in the work of art, sublimity in the work of art, and natural beauty. He begins with a restatement of his thesis about the cognitive content of art: "The work of art reflects to us the identity of the conscious and unconscious activities" of thought. In spite of the fact that the work of art thus seems to overcome the alleged contradiction between the conscious and the unconscious, there is apparently some sense in which they remain ineluctably different, a point that Schelling makes by calling the "opposition" between them "an infinite one." On the basis of this lemma he then infers that "the basic character of the work of art is that of an *unconscious infinity* [synthesis of nature and freedom]. Besides what he has put into his work with manifest intention, the artist seems instinctively, as it were, to have depicted therein an infinity, which no finite understanding is capable of unfolding to the full" (StI, Schelling 1978: 225). This seems to be Schelling's way of deducing Kant's claim in his theory of aesthetic ideas that an inspired work of art conveys a rational idea through a wealth of harmonious material for the imagination in a way that cannot be "grasped and made distinct" by any determinate concept of the work or its content.[33] From the position that "Every aesthetic production proceeds from the feeling of an infinite contradiction, and hence also the feeling which accompanies completion of the art-product" (or presumably the experience thereof) "must be one of an infinite tranquility," Schelling infers that "this latter, in turn, must also pass over into the work of art itself," and he therefore characterizes beauty as "the infinite finitely displayed" or "exhibited" [*dargestellt*]: beauty is the manifestation in the work of the cognitive content of aesthetic experience accompanied with the affective accompaniment thereof, namely, satisfaction at the resolution of the contradiction between the infinite and the finite and so forth. In this context, an unmistakable allusion to Johann Joachim Winckelmann's conception of the ideal of beauty emphasizes Schelling's conception of the passive rather than active nature of aesthetic pleasure: "Hence the

[33] KU, §49, Kant AA 05: 315.

outward expression of the work of art is one of calm, and of silent grandeur [*der stillen Größe*], even where the aim is to give expression to the utmost intensity of pain or joy" (StI, Schelling 1978: 225).[34]

Schelling claims that beauty is the "basic feature of every work of art" because the resolution of the tension between the infinite and involuntary unconscious and the finite and intentional conscious is the gist of every aesthetic experience. But he then reintroduces the traditional distinction between the beautiful and the sublime as a distinction between kinds of beauty in his own sense, a distinction that does not concern the ultimate cognitive and affective character of the experience, but the relation of the experience to its object. His claim is that "the difference between the work of art consists simply in this, that where beauty is present, the infinite contradiction is eliminated in the object itself, whereas when sublimity is present, the conflict is not reconciled in the object itself, but merely uplifted to a point at which it is involuntarily eliminated in the intuition, and this, then, is much as if it were to be eliminated in the object" (StI, Schelling 1978: 226). In the case of beauty in its narrower sense, not only does our experience seem to resolve the fundamental contradiction, but the object somehow also immediately presents itself to us as intrinsically harmonious, whereas in the case of the sublime the object presents itself to us as riven by contradiction but nevertheless leads to the harmonious experience of beauty in its broader sense. Here Schelling seems to be drawing on Kant's claim that we can speak of beauty as if it were a property of the object[35] but that the sublime "should properly be ascribed only to the manner of thinking, or rather to its foundation in human nature,"[36] a claim that Kant makes because for him the essence of the experience of sublimity is a reflection on our own superiority over mere nature rather than a response to harmony within an object.

While Kant had initially analyzed primarily natural beauty and then treated artistic beauty as a special and complicated case of beauty in general, Schelling has emphasized artistic beauty and treats natural beauty as the derivative case. Having treated teleological purposiveness in nature as something that bridges the gap between intention and the unintentional but does not bring out the specifically human character of intention, he does not ground an account of natural beauty in the experience of organisms nor does he think of artistic beauty as the imitation of natural beauty. Instead, he says, "so far from the merely contingent beauty of

[34] See Winckelmann 1765: 30. [35] KU, §6, Kant AA 05: 211. [36] KU, §30, Kant AA 05: 280.

nature providing the rule to art, the fact is, rather, that what art creates in its perfection is the principle and norm for the judgment of natural beauty" (StI, Schelling 1978: 227): we find nature beautiful insofar as it seems to rise to the level of art rather than art beautiful insofar as it seems like nature.

Finally, Schelling draws an inference that emphasizes the strictly cognitivist character of his interpretation of aesthetic experience. On his account, the essence of the experience of art is its cognitive content, its revelation of the resolution of the contradiction between the conscious and the unconscious and so forth, and since that content is essentially the same for all works of art, there really is no important difference among works of art:

> For if aesthetic production proceeds from freedom, and if it is precisely for freedom that this opposition of conscious and unconscious activities is an absolute one, there is properly speaking but one absolute work of art, which may indeed exist in altogether different versions, yet is still only one, even though it should not yet exist in its most ultimate form. It can be no objection to this view that it is not consistent with the very liberal use now made of the predicate "work of art." Nothing is a work of art which does not exhibit an infinite, either directly, or at least by reflection. (StI, Schelling 1978: 231)

This is not something that Kant ever would have said, for not only do different works of art take different ideas of reason as their themes, but since the essence of artistic beauty is the way in which the work of art freely plays with its theme – expressing the free play of the cognitive powers of its creator and stimulating a free play of those powers in its audience – there must be possible, at least in principle, an infinite number of genuine works of art rather than just one.

V Schelling's aesthetics in *The Philosophy of Fine Art*

The modification of this point is, however, one of the central accomplishments of Schelling's 1802–3 lectures on *The Philosophy of Fine Art*. These lectures are an early document of Schelling's transition to his Identity Philosophy, his replacement of his earlier, still Fichtean view that nature on the one hand and human theoretical and practical thought on the other are both manifestations of some more fundamental kind of thought, the unity of which is revealed only through art, with the more Spinozistic view that nature on the one hand and human thought on the other are both manifestations of some underlying subject that cannot be identified with

either but can only be characterized as the "absolute" or "God."[37] This new standpoint leads to several important changes in Schelling's conception of art. For one, since the absolute can never be fully grasped by *any* human means, there is no need for him to suppose that one form of human thought and activity is the *best* way to grasp it, and he now treats philosophy and art as two different ways of grasping the nature of reality, the former more abstract, intellectual, or "ideal," and the latter more concrete, intuitive, or "real." Further, again since there is no uniquely adequate way to grasp the absolute, although every form of human thought or activity is in some way an apprehension of the absolute, Schelling drops the insistence that in some sense there is only one work of art, and recognizes genuine variety among the media and genres of art as well as among particular works of art. Indeed, the bulk of the lectures consists in detailed description of the variety of the arts and of works of art. Finally, both since the absolute has now been identified with God and also because art is now understood as the more concrete rather than abstract way of apprehending the absolute, Schelling now introduces the idea that the characteristic content of art is the representation of *gods*, or the creation of mythology. This would prepare the way for the labors on a philosophy of mythology that occupied much of Schelling's later life.[38]

In spite of these changes, Schelling's underlying view that the significance of art lies in its cognitive content rather than in the free play of our cognitive powers with cognitive content remains fixed, and if anything his emphasis on the pleasure of aesthetic experience is even more diminished than previously – he goes from giving an account of aesthetic pleasure as negative satisfaction at the resolution of a paradox to barely mentioning it at all. He does preserve the idea that beauty manifests the underlying identity or as he now calls it "indifference" between opposites, now both the ideal and the real as well as freedom and necessity, and he even goes so far as to say that in beauty *nature* appears to have played, but he does not say that *we* or our mental powers freely play with beauty, nor does he mention any special pleasure in play:

> Since our explanation of beauty asserts that it is the mutual informing of the real and the ideal to the extent that this informing is represented in reflected imagery, this explanation also includes the following assertion: beauty is the indifference, intuited within the real, of freedom and necessity. For

[37] Schelling first pointed toward the new Identity Philosophy in the *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie* (1801) and *Fernere Darstellung aus dem System der Philosophie* (1802); see AS 02: 37–167.
[38] See *Philosophie der Mythologie* (1842), AS 06: 11–686, and Schelling 2007.

> example, we say a figure is beautiful in whose design nature appears to have played with the greatest freedom and the most sublime presence of mind, yet always within the forms and boundaries of the strictest necessity and adherence to law. A poem is beautiful in which the highest freedom conceives and comprehends itself within necessity. Accordingly, art is an absolute synthesis or mutual interpenetration of freedom and necessity. (PK, §16, Schelling 1989b: 30)

Schelling certainly must be supposing that a human being and not something else in nature creates a poem, but precisely in this human case, though a reference to freedom remains, any reference to play disappears. And again there is no mention of pleasure at all.

The underlying cognitivism of Schelling's aesthetics does not radically change in *The Philosophy of Art*, and there is hardly space here for a review of its detailed treatment of the arts. However, one point about the treatment of the arts in these lectures deserves emphasis. This is Schelling's view that although philosophy is primarily the intellectual or "ideal" form for representing reality and art the intuitive or "real" form – "Art is real and objective, philosophy ideal and subjective" (PK, Introduction, Schelling 1989b: 13) – the distinction between real and ideal appears *within* the arts as well. Thus although all art has a sensible, intuitive, and objective aspect, some arts are more sensible and objective than others and some more intellectual and subjective than others. Thus, Schelling maintains that "The *formative* [*bildende*] arts constitute the *real* side of the world of art" (PK, §72, Schelling 1989b: 99), while "*Verbal* art is the *ideal* side of the world of art" (PK, §73, Schelling 1989b: 102). That is, poetry (Schelling conceives of the verbal arts as divided primarily into the poetic genres of lyric, epic, and drama) uses the sensible media of sound and imagery in order to present abstract ideas to us relatively directly, while in the formative arts such as architecture and painting the sensible qualities of the media are much more prominent in our experience and their intellectual content is less direct. Schelling's claim is actually that in each form of art "*all the forms of unity recur: the real, the ideal, and the indifference of the two*" (PK, §87, Schelling 1989b: 128), but in each medium and genre of art the relation among these moments is different and one is more prominent than the other.

Schelling's classification of the arts is even more complicated than this initial characterization suggests. He divides the arts into three main groups rather than two: on one extreme, the most concrete or real of the arts, which include music and painting; on the other hand, the most ideal of the arts, the various forms of the verbal arts; but in the middle, the "plastic" arts of architecture and sculpture, which involve more of a mix of the real

and the ideal than either of the other two groups. Schelling groups music and painting together as the most real of the arts, because both depend upon the most immediate features of sense perception, such as the rhythm of sound, color, and line, and classifies the verbal arts as the most ideal because they have the least direct relation to sense perception, conveying abstract ideas through words that suggest sensual imagery rather than directly presenting us with sensory experiences. Architecture and sculpture are put in the middle because they present us with objects that are both more real – not just sensible but also three-dimensional – than the imagery of poetry but at the same time, allegedly, better at suggesting abstract ideas to us than music or painting, thus more ideal than those. Sculpture, for example, "*as the immediate expression of reason, expresses its ideas particularly or even primarily by means of the human figure*" (PK, §122, Schelling 1989b: 183).

But the most important point is that throughout all the details of his classification of the arts and his loving discussion of the details of particular media and works of art, Schelling always keeps his eye on the cognitive significance of art. So, for example, he says that "the primary demand that must be made of drawing" is "*truth*," although not "only that particular kind of truth attainable through faithful imitation of nature," but a truth that lies "at a deeper level than even nature has suggested and than the mere surface features of figures show" (PK, §87, Schelling 1989b: 131). Or about painting as a whole, which involves color and chiaroscuro as well as drawing (PK, §87, Schelling 1989b: 128), he says that "painting is the art in which appearance and truth must be one, in which appearance must be truth and truth appearance" (PK, §87, Schelling 1989b: 139). Among the intermediate arts, for example, "Sculpture as such is an image of the universe" (PK, §122, Schelling 1989b: 182). And "the *essential nature* of poesy is the same as that of all art: it is the representation of the absolute or of the universe in the particular" (PK, Schelling 1989b: 204).[39] All art employs some more or less sensible medium to convey some truth more or less abstractly, and its essence always lies in some actual cognition rather than in a free play of our cognitive powers.

Thus, through his recognition of the variety of arts and through his thesis that all the arts "intuit" ideas "objectively," in the form of "*real* or *objective* living and existing ideas" of the "gods" of mythology (PK, Introduction, Schelling 1989b: 17), in which morally important ideas are personified, Schelling returns to a version of Kant's theory that the arts

[39] The division of the lectures into numbered paragraphs ceases before this point.

present a potentially infinite variety of aesthetic ideas, but a version from which the element of the free play of our cognitive powers with those ideas and the positive pleasure of such play has to a considerable extent disappeared. Whether this reversion to the fundamental idea of traditional aesthetics was a good thing or not, I will not venture to judge, but it was certainly influential: the strictly cognitivist approach to aesthetics would be continued by Schopenhauer, in his 1818 *The World as Will and Representation*, and by Hegel, who first lectured on aesthetics the year after *The World as Will and Representation* was first published, and would continue to dominate aesthetic theory at least until the time of Nietzsche and Dilthey.[40]

[40] Some of the material in sections III and IV of this chapter has previously appeared in Guyer 2014, vol. 2.

CHAPTER 5

"Exhibiting the particular in the universal": philosophical construction and intuition in Schelling's Philosophy of Identity (1801–1804)

Daniel Breazeale

The idea that philosophy is in some sense a "constructive" enterprise has a long and distinguished pedigree. Equally venerable is the claim that there are deep parallels between the methods employed by the mathematician, especially the Euclidian geometer, and by the philosopher. To be sure, there is an equally long tradition that disputes these claimed affinities and insists that philosophy is not *mathesis* and is incapable of constructing its concepts. A close examination of these same debates reveals that partisan enthusiasm has often been allowed to obscure the fact that both advocates and critics of philosophical construction have all too often held very different understandings of what is – and what is not – involved in, required for, and implied by "construction" in philosophy.[1] This is particularly true of the debates concerning philosophical construction that occupied the attention of German philosophers in the immediate wake of Kant's unequivocal proscription of the same.

The following remarks focus upon a small, but significant, episode in this longer history, namely, upon F.W.J. Schelling's efforts to appropriate the notions of "intellectual intuition" and "construction in intuition" (both of which are prominent features of the methodology of J.G. Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, especially during the earlier or Jena period of the same) and to revise them in light of his new System of Identity during the first years of the nineteenth century.

[1] For a general survey of the history of the concept of philosophical construction see Taureck 1975. A full account of the development of the concept of philosophical construction in German philosophy during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries would have to take into account not just the writings of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, but also those of many other philosophers, including F.H. Jacobi, J.S. Beck, Salomon Maimon, and C.H. Hojer – not to mention, in the case of Schelling at least, Plato and Spinoza.

In his writings and lectures of the period between 1801 and 1804[2] Schelling introduced and expounded a new System of Philosophy, the so-called System of Identity. Abandoning his earlier strategy of presenting the Philosophy of Nature and Transcendental Philosophy as two complementary branches or "sides" of philosophy – one "objective" and proceeding from raw matter to the emergence of intelligence and the other "subjective" and proceeding from the pure I to the emergence of nature, and each proceeding "genetically," from one step in the self-construction of nature or intelligence to the next, higher one – he now proposes to begin with the immediate intellectual intuition of "absolute reason," understood as "the total indifference of the subjective and objective" (DSP, AA 1.10: 116; Schelling 2001a: 349).

The law or principle of such absolute identity, and thus the only proposition that is true unconditionally or in-itself, is the proposition A = A, which is the only "form" in which the "essence" of original identity can be said to exist. Reflection upon the relationship between the "essence," the "being," and the "form" of absolute identity reveals a crucial difference between the essential "qualitative indifference" of subjective and objective factors in absolute identity considered with respect to its *Wesen* or "essence" and the "quantitative difference" of these same factors that is implicit in its very "form" or "mode of being" (A = A, in which the subject must be capable of being discriminated from the predicate or object, but without negating the essential identity of A).

This is the framework within which the Philosophy of Identity operates and within which it "constructs" a totality of finite things, or rather "ideas," since philosophy, as a pure a priori science, concerns itself with "things" only as they "really are" and not as they present themselves within empirical experience. What concerns us, however, are not the further details of Schelling's new system, but rather the distinctive *method* by means of which he establishes his starting point and then proceeds to "construct" his system of philosophy. So let us consider eight of the more salient features of Schelling's new conception of philosophical construction: (1) its "absolute" standpoint, (2) its principle (the law of rational identity), (3) its organ (intellectual intuition), (4) its actual method (exhibition of the particular in the universal), (5) its elements (ideas of reason), (6) its product (the System of Identity), (7) its truth and reality, and (8) the unteachable, innate capacity for intellectual intuition (philosophical genius).

[2] These include DSP, FD, VM, PK, and several important essays published in 1802 in the *Kritisches Journal der Philosophie*, including VNP and CP.

I The "absolute" *standpoint* of philosophical construction

What is philosophy? According to Schelling's *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie*, philosophy is distinguished from every other science in that it can be pursued only from "the standpoint of reason," which is also "the standpoint of the absolute" (DSP, AA 1.10: 117; Schelling 2001a: 350). Neither "objective" nor "subjective," the standpoint of philosophy is the highest and most universal standpoint possible. Philosophy pursued from this absolute standpoint rejects the exclusive standpoints of both "realism" and "idealism," each of which, he maintains, defines itself primarily by its opposition to the other. In contrast, genuine philosophy, like absolute reason itself, rejects the kind of thinking that posits a fundamental opposition between subject and object, ideal and real, mind and nature, or knowing and being. The kind of thinking that posits such oppositions produces a philosophy of mere "understanding" rather than one of "reason" and occupies the standpoint, not of "speculation," but of "reflection."

Like Fichte's revised presentation of his own system of transcendental idealism *nova methodo*, Schelling's new System of Identity begins with an act of *radical abstraction*, but with one even more radical than that postulated by Fichte, whose "pure I," according to Schelling, though a kind of "subject-object" in its own right, is nevertheless not the absolute, as is made plain by Fichte's frank admission (at least during his earlier or Jena period) that philosophers, like human beings generally, are confined within the circle of consciousness and that philosophical deduction must come to an end with the recognition of those "incomprehensible boundaries" – the manifold of feeling, the "invitation" to limit our own freedom out of recognition of that of another, and the pre-deliberative determinacy of the pure will – within which we simply find ourselves to be confined.[3] Fichte therefore fails, according to Schelling, to attain the absolute standpoint of reason,[4] for in order to occupy this standpoint one must abstract not only from the *objects* of consciousness, but also from the *subject* as well (DSP, AA 1.10: 116–17; Schelling 2001a: 349. See too FD, SW 1.4: 256). As part of philosophy's move beyond the standpoint of consciousness, it must also dispense with the kind of thinking typical of the latter, the kind of thinking that Schelling associates with "the method of reflection," which

[3] See Fichte AA 1.5: 184; Fichte 1994: 149.
[4] See Schelling's extended critique of Fichtean idealism in FD, SW 1.4: 353–61.

"works only from oppositions and rests on oppositions" (DSP, AA 1.10: 115; Schelling 2001a: 348).

Instead, one must think of philosophy as a kind of "primordial knowing" or *Urwissen*, a "knowing of knowing," which contains within itself all other instances of cognition, as particulars included in "universal" or "absolute" cognition. Since all knowing involves some reference to the object known, and since absolute knowing cannot, by definition, be conditioned by its object (in the way that ordinary knowledge clearly is), then in this case we must begin by positing the *identity* of the knowing subject and the known object, of ideality and reality; i.e., we must posit "the pure dissolution of the particular in the universal," in which the "opacity" of the former is illuminated by the "transparency of a universal rational cognition" (VM, SW 1.5: 215–16; Schelling 1966: 9). We must, in other words, think of absolute cognition as *identical* to the absolute itself. The uncompromising abolition of the opposition between thought and being, which is and has always been the goal of both theoretical cognition and practical striving, is thus not the *conclusion*, but the *starting point* of Schelling's new Philosophy of Identity.

II The *principle* of philosophical construction (the law of rational identity)

If philosophy *begins* with the claim to have overcome the eternal oppositions that have plagued nearly all previous philosophy, then, one may well wonder, what still *remains for it to accomplish?* What is the philosopher supposed to *do* once he has situated himself at the "absolute" standpoint of indifference, where he finds himself to be not just immediately *aware* of, but even *at one with* the absolute itself? Schelling's answer is that philosophy's new task now is to *show* or to *demonstrate* precisely *how* those oppositions and multiplicities that are and remain such a fundamental feature of actual human experience, both sensible and intellectual, appear when viewed from his lofty new absolute perspective, thereby grasping and exhibiting them not as they *appear*, but as they *really are*.

The distinctive character of this new task was suggested – albeit unwittingly – by Kant in his characterization of mathematical construction as the "exhibition of the universal in the particular" or as the "presentation" of a concept in a pure intuition. Philosophy's distinctive task, according to Schelling, is precisely the reverse: namely, "the exhibition of the particular in the universal" (CP, SW 1.5: 131; Schelling 2008: 275); or rather, since the opposition between "particular" and "universal" is itself abolished from the

standpoint of the absolute, the task of philosophy may be described as the "*exhibition of the unity of the particular and the universal in their absolute indifference*" (CP, SW 1.5: 131; Schelling 2008: 275). Or, in the more colorful language employed by Schelling in his popular *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums*: "The primary and necessary task of philosophy is to comprehend the birth of all things from God or the absolute" (VM, SW 1.5: 324; Schelling 1966: 122). As this last quotation indicates, though Schelling may have borrowed the *language* of his account of philosophical construction from Kant's discussion of mathematical construction, the *model* for his actual presentation of his Philosophy of Identity is not Kant, but Spinoza, whose system, according to Schelling, offers the best example of what it means to "exhibit the universal in the particular" (DSP, AA 1.10: 115; Schelling 2001a: 348),[5] inasmuch as the whole point of the same is actually to show that "all is one," *hen kai pan*.

The task of philosophy is therefore not to *prove* anything by means of discursive arguments, but rather to *display* or to *exhibit* directly the identity it begins simply by *asserting*, and the proper name for such an exhibition is *construction*. Schelling thus understands construction not simply as the proper *method* of philosophy, but rather as *identical* to philosophy itself, the sole business of which is to exhibit the universal in the particular. But he acknowledges the need to provide some account of *why* this is indeed the proper task of philosophy, which is, presumably, what he means when he asserts, in his 1802 essay *Über die Construktion in der Philosophie*, that philosophy must *begin* by "constructing construction" itself (CP, SW 1.5: 137; Schelling 2008: 279).

Philosophy cannot start with *definitions* or *axioms*, from which it might then deduce further propositions or prove various theorems;[6] nor can it commence with some hypothetically postulated first principle or *Grundsatz*, which it might subsequently hope somehow to *confirm*. Instead, it must *exhibit itself* directly *as* absolute knowing; and the only way it can do this is by actually *showing* how all other kinds of knowing are related to and included within absolute knowing. Thus, insofar as philosophy succeeds in

[5] In FD Schelling mentions another reason for his choice of Spinoza, namely, the latter's recognition of intellectual intuition as the highest of the three modes of cognition (SW 1.4: 355). In CP Schelling praises Spinoza for his "geometrical method," though he adds that this method has been completely misunderstood by many of its previous admirers and that Spinoza himself "did not go far enough back in his construction" (CP, SW 1.5: 126–7, 126; Schelling 2008: 272).

[6] Kant, claims Schelling, was wrong in thinking that axioms and definitions are true principles or starting points. They are actually nothing but boundary points, and as such, are required by particular sciences, but not by the absolute science of philosophy, which begins instead with what is "absolutely first." On this point, see CP, SW 1.5: 237; Schelling 2008: 279.

actually "constructing" the asserted identity of the universal and particular, it will thereby also have succeeded in "constructing itself" as reason. By "exhibiting the particular in the universal" it will also exhibit itself as absolute cognition, that is, as philosophy. Since, according to Schelling, it is only by introducing the "method of construction" into philosophy that the latter can progress beyond those oppositions in which the Kantian and Fichtean systems remain mired, then an account of this same method will constitute "one of the most important chapters in the science of philosophy" (CP, SW 1.5: 125; Schelling 2008: 271).

The *rule* or *principle* guiding the kind of "construction" envisioned by Schelling is precisely the same as the principle of his philosophy as a whole: namely, the principle of identity, understood not merely as a formal law of analytic thinking (A = A), but also as a *synthetic* principle (i.e., as the "law of rational identity," a law that, unlike the purely formal law of identity, asserts the *identity of opposites*). As the principle of philosophical construction, what the law of identity asserts is the identity of *particulars* and the *universal* (or, as we shall soon see, the identity of *ideas* and the absolute).[7] Since the proper business of philosophy *is* construction, and since the principle of construction *is* the law of identity in this form, it follows that anything that cannot be subordinated to this principle, that is, anything that cannot be constructed, simply has no place whatsoever within philosophy (CP, SW 1.5: 134; Schelling 2008: 277).

In the case of Schelling, however, any talk of a rule or principle of philosophical construction can be misleading; for the principle of rational identity serves for him not as a law of *thinking*, but rather, as we shall see, as a rule for *intuiting* particulars in their relationship to the universal or absolute. It is, in other words, not a rule for intellectual *inference*, but a guideline for *seeing with the mind's eye*.[8] Schelling's method of construction is therefore not a discursive means of *deriving* one thing from another, but rather a strategy for articulating and *displaying* the indifferent unity that is grasped all at once in the original intuition of the absolute unity of the real and the ideal, with which the Philosophy of Identity begins, a means of

[7] See FD, SW 1.4: 345, CP, SW 1.5: 134–5; Schelling 2008: 277. See too Schelling's marginal note to DSP, in which he writes that "all construction proceeds from relative identity. Absolute identity is not constructed, but simply is" (DSP, AA 1.10: 142n.; Schelling 2001a: 368n.).

[8] It is therefore misleading of Temilo van Zantwijk to describe the principle of identity as Schelling's "single rule of construction," a "rule of inference for deriving particular things from the absolute" (van Zantwijk 2001: 112). It is true that Schelling explicitly introduced the law of identity in DSP, but only as "*the ultimate law for the being of reason*" (AA 1.10: 118; Schelling 2001a: 350), and by no means as a "rule of inference" for philosophical construction. Furthermore, he often and explicitly denies that construction can be characterized as "derivation."

viewing the same not abstractly, but *concretely*, as something other than a "night in which all cows are black."[9]

There can, as Schelling cheerfully admits, be no "argument in favor" of the kind of constructions encountered in his Philosophy of Identity. Such constructions do not constitute *proofs* in the logical sense, in which one proposition is formally deduced from or entailed by another, from which it acquires its certainty; instead, each philosophical construction must stand purely on its own as a self-contained whole, and it cannot obtain its certainty from anywhere else; instead, it must be *self-evident*. Nor are philosophical constructions *explanations* in the scientific sense, in which one thing or event is "explained" by relating it to some external cause or effect. Explanations of this sort always, according to Schelling, lack the distinguishing features of truly *rational* cognition: namely, universality and necessity (See FD, SW 1.5: 344 and VM, SW 1.5: 322; Schelling 1966: 120–1 and PK, SW, 1.5: 418; Schelling 1989b: 53–4). Properly understood, philosophical construction does not "explain" anything, but simply "articulates or presents" [*aussprechen oder darstellen*] it.[10]

The philosophical constructions that constitute Schelling's Philosophy of Identity are not meant to provide a *genetic* account of anything in the Fichtean manner, nor are they to be understood as *deductions* or *derivations* in the transcendental sense, in which one thing is derived from another as the condition for the possibility thereof. Such methods, according to Schelling, are entirely inappropriate for a philosophy that begins with what is utterly and absolutely "unconditioned" by anything.[11] Moreover,

[9] This, of course, is Hegel's snide characterization of Schelling's method of construction in the Preface to the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. It is much less frequently noted that Schelling had already employed very similar language to defend himself – in advance – from precisely such criticism.

[10] In discussing the differences between "theory" and philosophy, Schelling remarks that, *properly understood* (as they generally have not been) both theory and experimentation "limit themselves to mere articulation and presentation of appearances themselves, and in this they are the same as construction, which is equally unconcerned with explaining anything" (VM, SW 1.5: 322; Schelling 1966: 121). For a vigorous critique of the commonly accepted notion of "scientific theory," which includes a proposal for a new understanding of theory consistent with the a priori procedure of Schelling's philosophy of nature, see the brief "Einige allgemeine Betrachtungen" that appeared in the second number of the first volume of Schelling's *Zeitschrift für spekulative Physik* in 1800 (SW 1.6: 527–33).

[11] See FD, SW 1.4: 340–2: if one begins with the unity of the infinite and the finite, then one has no need to "deduce" or "derive" either from the other. Nor is it the proper business of philosophy to "deduce" the conditions necessary for the possibility of actual experience, inasmuch as philosophy, according to Schelling, is not at all concerned with the world of appearances, but confines itself entirely to the a priori realm of the absolute. It is therefore quite wrong to claim (as does Ende 1973: 50–1) that it was Schelling who first combined the idea of "derivation" with that of philosophical construction. It was instead Fichte who first accomplished this, and, by the time of the Identity Philosophy Schelling was explicitly *denying* that philosophical construction constitutes a "derivation" of anything.

transcendental derivations, along with genetic accounts based upon the same, always proceed, as Fichte acknowledged, by means of the law of reflective opposition, a law that has no purchase within the domain of absolute identity.[12] For a similar reason, Schelling also objects to calling his method of construction *synthetic* (even though the principle of identity is a synthetic principle). Even if Fichte's "synthetic method of philosophizing" may be considered a "true image of the absolute method," it still falls far short of the latter, and it does this precisely because it continually "pulls apart in reflection" and "represents as a process" what is, in fact, as grasped by the true method of philosophical construction, something "unitary and internally related" (FD, SW 1.4: 399; Schelling 2001b: 390). If what the philosopher purports to "derive" from his first principle is, as it must be, always already contained in his initial starting point, then surely it is more accurate to say that what the philosopher does in his constructions is not to *derive* or *deduce* anything new, but simply to "exhibit" or "display" [*darstellen*] what is contained in this starting point. Philosophical construction is therefore nothing more than a way of *making explicit* something that was *implicit* form the start.

For all of these reasons, Schelling describes his own philosophical constructions not as proofs, derivations, or deductions, but as "demonstrations" in the geometrical sense: *ostensive* rather than *discursive* proofs. Such constructions all share the same goal and strategy: to *make visible* or *self-evident* the ultimate unity of reality, to *exhibit* or to *display* the particular in the universal, to *demonstrate* the unity of the one and the many – and to do so in the manner of a geometrical proof that "exhibits" in a particular figure a necessary and universal truth about all such figures, *directly and self-evidently*.

The relationship between philosophical construction and the governing principle of the same, the law of rational identity, is perhaps most eloquently expressed in a rhapsodic passage near the end of §IV of the *Fernere Darstellungen*, in which Schelling invokes the vision of ultimate unity (and thus the obscure grasp of the "one true philosophy"), which he claims was shared by Pythagoras, Plato, Parmenides, Heraclitus, Spinoza, and Leibniz: the insight that "nothing is clearly cognized in both its particularity and its absoluteness except when the all is actually comprehended in the all and when this almost divine chaos is represented both in its unity and in its

[12] Deductions guided by what Schelling calls the "law of relative opposition" are always thoroughly "conditional," and anything "derived" in this manner is always "conditioned" as well. On this point, see FD, SW 1.4: 396–8; Schelling 2001b: 388–9.

confusion, by means of a construction that is carried through to totality, that actually grasps all in all" (FD, SW 1.4: 402).[13] And this, declares Schelling, is precisely what he intends to do in his Philosophy of Identity: actually to carry out this construction that was only called for and anticipated by his venerable predecessors, thereby putting an end once and for all to the era of opposition and reflection and ushering in the new age of eternal harmony, in which the inherent divinity of all things will at last be firmly grasped by the human mind. No longer will this profound truth remain a matter of accidental insight; the sole purpose of Schelling's *Identitätsphilosophie* and of its method of a priori construction is precisely to lay this truth before our eyes and to exhibit it in a *form* as absolute and unchanging as the *content* itself – transforming the "night of the absolute into day" (FD, SW 1.4: 404; Schelling 2001b: 391) by means of philosophical construction.

III The *organ* of philosophical construction (intellectual intuition)

Though Schelling's indifferent absolute can clearly be considered a kind of "universal," it is manifestly not an *abstract concept of the understanding*; for if it were, then it too would be enmeshed in the reflective oppositions characteristic of the latter. Instead, it must be understood as an *idea of reason* – though much more in the positive, Platonic than in the regulative, Kantian sense of the same. This is why Schelling readily concedes that the "essential unity" from which philosophical construction must proceed cannot be "proven" [*bewiesen*], that is, cannot be inferred or derived from anything else (though, he says, one can prove that *without* presupposing this indifferent unity there can be no genuine science whatsoever) (VM, SW 1.5: 215; Schelling 1966: 9).

This, however, is *not* to say that philosophy must begin with a "hypothesis" or "postulate," both of which Schelling unequivocally rejects; for even though it cannot be *proven* (i.e., cognized indirectly by means of something else), the absolute *can*, according to Schelling, be *cognized directly* – not simply *thought of* as *possible*, but *intuited* as *real*.[14] And indeed, as we

[13] Compare this with the very similar passage in *Bruno*, SW 1.4: 307–10.

[14] As Schelling explains, this immediate cognition of the absolute deserves to be called "intellectual intuition," because all intuition involves an identification of thought and being, an immediate grasp of "what is" (which is, of course, also how Kant had characterized intuition and is why both he and Schelling agree that reality can be given only by means of intuition). For this reason the mere *thought* of the absolute (as that which exists immediately through its concept) is not sufficient, for, as

have seen, it is precisely and only by means of such an intuition of the absolute that one raises oneself to the standpoint of reason or philosophy, inasmuch as such an immediate grasp of the absolute is precisely what *defines* this standpoint. (In clarifying his admission that the absolute starting point of philosophy cannot be "proven to anyone," Schelling explains that this is to be understood in the same sense in which light cannot be "proven" to someone who is born blind [FD, SW 1.4: 366; Schelling 2001b: 380].)

Like the intellectual intuition encountered in Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, Schelling's intellectual intuition is immediate and self-evident, but unlike the latter it is not identical to the philosopher's "inner intuition" of the self-positing I, but is directed at an object that is at least intentionally distinct from the I: the absolute – though of course, as Schelling hastens to remind us, nothing finite – and least of all the I – is really "distinct" from the absolute. In his writings on Philosophy of Nature Schelling had already criticized, if only implicitly, Fichte's "subjective" notion of intellectual intuition, and had purported to supplement the same with what he called "objective intellectual intuition," which requires that one abstract entirely from the intuiting subject and raise oneself to an "intellectual intuition of nature" (see AAE, AA 1.10: 92, 94, 100). But as it functions in the Philosophy of Identity, intellectual intuition is neither "objective" nor "subjective" in either of these senses; instead, it is "absolute," inasmuch as it is the direct awareness *of* the absolute and (insofar as absolute cognition is itself identical to the absolute) *by* the absolute.

Intellectual intuition functions in two distinguishable ways in the context of Schellingian construction: first, it is the indispensable means by which one gains initial access to that absolute standpoint from which philosophical construction *stricto sensu* becomes possible in the first place; second, it is the instrument or organ by means of which one accomplishes the actual labor of philosophical construction. Both of these functions are essential to philosophy as Schelling understands it during this period; hence his stark admonition: "without intellectual intuition, no philosophy" (See VM, SW 1.5: 255; Schelling 1966: 49).

a mere thought, it is not a *true* or *real* cognition of the absolute. The reality of the absolute must therefore be discovered in the same way all reality is discovered: that is, directly or by means of intuition. But in the case of the absolute, of course, we are concerned not with an intuition of any *sensible* reality, but with the reality of the absolute itself. See FD, SW 1.4: 368–9; Schelling 2001b: 382.

Regarding the first function, Schelling writes in *Fernere Darstellungen* that to occupy the absolute standpoint is to "see directly" [*erblicken*] for oneself the unity of thought and being, "not in this or that context, but simply in and for itself, and thus as the self-evidence of all self-evidence, the truth of all truth, that which is purely known in everything that is known: this is to elevate oneself to the intuition of absolute unity and thereby to intellectual intuition as such" (FD, SW 1.4: 364; Schelling 2001b: 378). This is the kind of intellectual intuition he appears to be referring to when he speaks of "a preliminary and purely formal kind of absolute cognition" (FD, SW 1.4: 366; Schelling 2001b: 380), which has as its content nothing but the indifferent unity of thought and being, form and essence. As such, it may be described as "the first speculative cognition," or as that intellectual intuition that is the "principle and ground of all philosophy" (FD, SW 1.4: 368; Schelling 2001b: 381–2), or even as the "absolute cognition" that is the essential instrument or organ of all philosophizing, inasmuch as it is only through such a preceding intuition of absolute identity that subsequent philosophical construction becomes possible in the first place (FD, SW 1.4: 339).

It is, however, the second function of intellectual intuition that most clearly illuminates Schelling's method of construction in his writings of this period and is therefore our main concern. Intellectual intuition in this sense is to be understood as the "overall capacity to see the universal in the particular, the infinite in the finite," and, as such, is described as the "unchangeable organ" or tool that is an indispensable condition of all genuine knowing (FD, SW 1.4: 362; Schelling 2001b: 377). To illustrate what this means, Schelling uses the example – derived from Goethe[15] – of the botanist who, as it were, "sees through" the individual specimen before him in order to grasp "the plant as such," in order "to see indifference within difference," something that, according to Schelling, is possible only by means of intellectual intuition. It is therefore only by virtue of this second function of intellectual intuition that the philosopher is able to move beyond the indifferent unity of his absolute starting point and "give birth" to a "totality of cognition," that is, to a complete *system* of philosophy (FD, SW 1.4: 391; Schelling 2001b: 384). The gist of the "absolute method" required for the construction of such a system is clearly stated in the very title of §IV of *Fernere Darstellungen:*

[15] For a discussion of Goethe's investigations of the *Urpflanze* and the influence of the same upon Schelling and others, see "The Methodology of the Intuitive Understanding," Förster 2012: ch. 11.

"On philosophical construction, or how to exhibit all things in the absolute" (FD, SW 1.4: 391; Schelling 2001b: 394).[16]

IV The actual *method* of philosophical construction or demonstration (exhibition of the particular in the universal)

As we have now seen, Schelling's method of philosophical construction is neither synthetic nor analytic; instead, it is "demonstrative" (a term that Schelling normally employs as an exact synonym for "constructive" [See VM, SW 1.5: 252; Schelling 1966: 46; CP, SW 1.5: 126–7; Schelling 2008: 273, and FD, SW 1.4: 392n., 407; Schelling 2001b: 385n., 393] and which he claims to have to borrowed, like the term construction itself, from mathematics). In every such "demonstration" something particular or finite is demonstrated or exhibited "in" something universal or infinite; and the essence of *philosophical* demonstration consists in the absolute *identification* or *equation* [*Gleichsetzung*] of the former and the latter. "These," writes Schelling, "are necessary and absolutely one in every construction, and only insofar as this is the case can any philosophical construction whatsoever be called absolute" (FD, SW 1.4: 393; Schelling 2001b: 393–4).

Mathematics, especially geometry, which for Schelling provides the best illustration of the method of construction or demonstration employed by philosophy, provides no "explanations," but demonstrates the truth of its theorems directly by means of construction. It does so in accordance with the principle of identity – here understood neither as a strictly logical, analytic principle nor as a "synthetic" one in the Kantian or Fichtean sense. The sole principle guiding such construction is the one with which we are already acquainted, the *law of rational identity*, for which the oppositions of analytic and synthetic, thought and being, infinite and finite, simply do not exist.

In accordance with this law, mathematics treats space and time (which Schelling characterizes as the universal images or attributes of the absolute) as the absolute itself and then proceeds to "demonstrate" the universality of the properties of the particular figures or relationships with which it is concerned by actually "constructing" them in pure space and time. What is "expressed" [*ausgedrückt*] or exhibited in such constructions is precisely the unity of the particular and the universal, and this is what endows such demonstrations with their characteristic certainty, self-evidence, and universal validity. With respect to its form, albeit not its content,

[16] In reference to the description of philosophical construction as the "absolute method" of philosophy, see FD, SW 1.4: 399; Schelling 2001b: 390.

mathematical cognition captures the essence of absolute cognition and therefore can provide us with an essential clue for understanding philosophical construction.[17] But for Schelling the key to understanding the universality and self-evidence of mathematics lies not (as it did for Fichte) in the *activity* of constructing, but rather in what one *becomes able to see* when one demonstrates or "exhibits the universal in the particular" in this manner.[18]

Philosophy displays the same unity that mathematics does – the unity of the finite and the infinite, of being and of thinking – but it has the more difficult task of "intuiting this unity immediately in the essence of the eternal itself and exhibiting it in reason" (FD, SW 1.4: 346–7). Both sciences exhibit in intuition the unity of being and thinking, but whereas mathematics exhibits it either in the finite, the realm of being (which is where geometry displays this unity, i.e., in space) or in the infinite, the realm of thinking (which is where arithmetic displays this unity, i.e., in time), philosophy displays it directly in the absolute, a domain in which there is no division between being and thinking, the finite and the infinite.

In accomplishing this, neither mathematics nor philosophy can rely merely upon concepts and the kind of cognition associated therewith (cognition via mere understanding or *Verstand*); instead, they must each display their distinctive types of unity by means of what Schelling calls "*Urbilder*," primordial images or forms, which involve no separation between thinking and being, the finite and the infinite, particular and universal. But the kind of *urbildliche Erkenntniß* proper to philosophy differs from that found in mathematics in that the former possesses *content* as well as form. But since this content is neither empirical nor capable of being exhibited in the purely formal kind of intuition characteristic of mathematics, it can be intuited only *intellectually*, and thus Schelling baptizes this content with an ancient, Platonic appellation: *ideas* (see FD, SW 1.4: 347).

One obvious implication of this account of the employment of intellectual intuition in philosophical construction and one often emphasized by Schelling himself is that the domain of philosophical construction is by no means limited to the pure I and the constitutive acts of the same. On the contrary, in order to engage in such construction we must "abstract entirely from the subjectivity of intellectual intuition" in order to raise ourselves to the standpoint of absolute cognition and to cognize by means of intellectual intuition "the absolute in and for itself" (FD, SW 1.4: 256).

[17] Concerning the relationship of mathematical to philosophical construction, see especially FD, SW 1.4: 345–8 and CP, SW 1.5: 128–40; Schelling 2008: 273–81.

[18] On this point, see Krings 1982: 347.

For Schelling, philosophy begins with an ascent to the "standpoint of reason," the standpoint of absolute identity. And once he has attained to this standpoint, the chief job for the philosophical construction worker is simply to look around and see for himself how *particularity* presents itself from this universal standpoint and reconciles itself therewith. As Schelling explains in §14 of his *Darstellung meines Systems*, since philosophy as such considers things only as they are "in themselves," that is "as infinite and absolute identity," then "true philosophy" – as Spinoza alone of all previous philosophers clearly grasped – "consists in the proof that absolute identity (the infinite) has not stepped outside of itself and that everything that is, insofar as it is, is infinity itself" (DSP, AA 1.10: 121; Schelling 2001a: 353). And, as we have also now seen, such a "proof" can consist only in the "demonstration" or "exhibition" of this claim with respect to some particular thing or unity. Hence, the distinctive task of philosophical construction is to *show* or to *reveal* the asserted identity of the particular and the universal, and to do so, more specifically, by "displaying" the former in the latter, thereby *directly demonstrating – i.e., constructing* – the truth in question (see FD, SW 1.4: 407; Schelling 2001b: 393).

Any such construction will necessarily be both universally valid and self-evident, because it – by definition – transfers the identity of form and essence (thought and being), which is the nominal criterion of truth itself, from the absolute starting point of philosophy to the particular unities "constructed" by the philosopher from his superior "standpoint of reason" (FD, SW 1.4: 408; Schelling 2001b: 394). Perhaps the best way to understand what philosophical construction actually consists in for Schelling is to think of it not as a way of "doing" anything, but rather as a *new way of seeing*, as a mode of vision in which one "sees" the particular in its unity with the absolute (and the absolute as present in the particular).

Though Schelling's conception of philosophical construction may have its proximate roots in Kant's account of mathematical construction, what most influenced him was not Kant's attention to the necessity of actually "doing" something – drawing a line, for instance – in order to produce a mathematical proof, but rather his description of mathematical construction as an "exhibition of the universal in the particular." This is a description that places the locus of mathematical self-evidence not in *machen* but in *darstellen* – in how a particular geometrical figure "exhibits" itself as a universal – that is to say, in how it allows us to *see* in this particular figure something that is universally and necessarily true of all such figures.

Significantly, however, Schelling's description of philosophical construction reverses the order contained in Kant's account of mathematical

construction, since, as we have seen, for Schelling, the essence of philosophical construction consists in *the exhibition of the particular in the universal (that is, in the absolute)*. Kant, to be sure, uses similar language in characterizing the task and method of philosophy and in distinguishing the latter from that of mathematics he declares that "philosophical cognition thus considers the particular only in the universal, but mathematical cognition considers the universal in the particular."[19] But, for Kant, the philosopher "considers" [*betrachtet*] the particular in the universal only by subsuming something – an individual percept or another concept – *under a concept*, whereas mathematics is able to "consider the universal in the particular" by exhibiting or demonstrating the universal in the particular via the act of *constructing* it. Schelling's disagreement with Kant on this point is precisely over whether or not philosophy can "consider the particular in the universal" in the sense of "exhibiting it in the universal," which is to say constructing it in pure, non-sensible intuition. Indeed, this is precisely what Schelling claims philosophy is able to do: "to exhibit the particular in the universal," a claim that he says is supported by a long "tradition," one that conceives of the universal not as an abstract "concept" that is formally opposed to the "particular," but rather as already united in its essence with the particular. In short, Kant's failure to endorse the idea of philosophy as the exhibition of the particular in the universal is simply a corollary of his failure to grasp the universal as an "idea" of reason in the *positive* sense (see CP, SW 1.5: 131; Schelling 2008: 275).

Schelling's reversal of the Kantian account of the procedure of geometry and his application of the same to philosophy is made possible by the fact – at least according to Schelling – that, unlike the geometer, the philosopher actually *begins with the universal* (that is, with the indifferent absolute as originally grasped in intellectual intuition or absolute cognition) and proceeds from there to the particular, which he then, so to speak, *assimilates as an idea* to that absolute unity he has previously grasped. The whole point of such "construction" is simply to make evident or to "demonstrate" (and thus to prove) the general claim that is already present, albeit only abstractly and as a mere promissory note, in the first, absolute cognition with which the system begins: namely, that *all really is one*.[20]

[19] KrV, A714/B742.

[20] For a provocative and original alternative interpretation of Schelling's conception of philosophical construction, particularly as applied to the Philosophy of Nature and derived almost entirely from VNP, see Ziche 2002. Ziche contends that for Schelling the absolute is neither itself an element of philosophical construction nor an object of the same. Instead, he argues that it is intuited only as the most general condition for the possibility of such construction. The role of the absolute in such a

The only way to demonstrate the truth of this claim, to "cash out" this promissory note, is by actually viewing the particular "through the lens," as it were, of the universal, thereby "exhibiting" the particular not merely *in* the absolute, but, with respect to its reality or essence, as *identical with it*. And this, according to Schelling, is precisely what Kant claimed is accomplished by mathematical construction (See CP, SW 1.5: 139; Schelling 2008: 180).[21]

V The *elements* of philosophical construction (ideas of reason)

As we have seen, the task of philosophical construction is "to exhibit all things in the absolute" (FD, SW 1.4: 391; Schelling 2001b: 394). But when Schelling refers to "all things," he is not really talking about what we commonly understand by this term, that is, the finite, empirical "things" of sense experience. On the contrary, the "things" with which philosophy is exclusively concerned and which it is charged with "constructing" must be understood not as concrete phenomenal appearances, but rather as things "as they are in themselves," that is, as they are viewed "from the standpoint of reason," a standpoint for which "there is no finitude" (DSP, AA 1.10: 121; Schelling 2001a: 353. See too FD, SW 1.4: 288; Schelling 2001b: 385). There is therefore no place within philosophical cognition as such (and thus, it would sometimes appear, no place within the absolute itself) for finite, sensible things. Thus, concedes Schelling, philosophy "has nothing to do with the actual world" (FD, SW 1.4: 408–9; Schelling 2001b: 395). This also implies that philosophical construction stands in no need of any "confirmation from experience" (See VM, SW 1.5: 325; Schelling 1966: 123–4 and "Einige allgemeine Betrachtungen," SW 1.4: 530). Indeed, one of the reasons that Schelling, following Plato, praises the study of geometry as good preparation for philosophy is precisely because it teaches one "to see what is essential and to lift oneself out of the realm of change" (CP, SW 1.5: 129; Schelling 2008: 174). Schelling thus describes his Philosophy of Identity as consistent with the "genuine Platonic

construction is thus similar to that of space in the construction of a geometrical figure: it is the universal *medium* within which such construction occurs (220). Ingenious as this interpretation may be, it utterly fails to explain what it might *mean* to construct a particular "within the horizon" of the absolute or how one can do this without "intuiting the absolute itself," which is, after all, the *real content* of what Schelling describes as "absolute cognition."

[21] Schelling also acknowledges his debt to Kant's construction of matter in VM, SW 1.5: 332; Schelling 1966: 130.

doctrine" precisely because "it has a purely negative relationship to the things of appearance; rather than proving that they are, it proves that they are not" (*Philosophie und Religion* [1804], SW 1.6: 624).[22]

Genuine philosophy, says Schelling, "cannot acknowledge the actuality of the world of appearances *as such*, not even insofar as *what it is in-itself* is contained in the absolute, but can recognize only its absolute lack of actuality" (FD, SW 1.4: 409; Schelling 2001b: 395). Inasmuch as philosophical construction succeeds in *exhibiting the particular in the universal*, this means that "the particular is annihilated as a particular – that is, in its opposition to the universal" (FD, SW 1.4: 393). It follows that the "particulars" that philosophical construction "displays within the universal" are neither finite spatio-temporal things nor sensible images or *Bilder* nor generalized concepts derived from such things and images; instead, the particulars that philosophy constructs are the archetypes or *Urbilder* of sensible things: not finite things or particulars, but *particulars that are also universals*. Schelling's proposed names for these "particular universals" that are the direct objects of philosophical construction include: "particular unities" (FD, SW 1.4: 398; Schelling 2001b: 390), "particular schematisms of world-intuition," "eternal prototypes of things" (VM, SW 1.5: 255; Schelling 1966: 49), and "potencies" of the absolute (FD, SW 1.4: 395; Schelling 2001b: 387).[23] But his favorite name for them is simply "ideas," and he therefore describes philosophy itself as "the science of ideas" (VM, SW 1.5: 255; Schelling 1966: 49).

It follows that the only way to engage in philosophical construction, that is, the only way to "exhibit particulars in the absolute," is to *cognize them* – not via discursive thinking or argumentation, to be sure, but, directly, by means of intellectual intuition – *in their particularity as absolute*, that is, to cognize them *as ideas*, which Schelling rapturously describes as "blessed beings," indeed, as "gods themselves, inasmuch as each idea is for itself absolute and yet is comprised in the absolute form"

[22] Because, for Schelling, philosophy cannot *explain* or *deduce* or *derive* finite appearances from the absolute, there is simply no *transition* to be made from the latter to the former, and thus the relationship in question can be characterized only as a "distancing" or "fall" from the absolute. As Ernst Cassirer points out, one of the most problematic implications of Schelling's philosophical program during this period is that it implies the *nothingness* of finite things in space and time, inasmuch as such things cannot be "constructed" and thus have no standing in relation to the absolute and no reality of their own. But this also means that Schelling has no way to explain the brute facticity of our experience of such things; indeed, he cannot even account for their *possibility*. See Cassirer 1974: 63.

[23] In his lectures on the philosophy of art Schelling also calls these ideas "potencies" [*Potenzen*] of the absolute. See PK, SW, 1.5: 367; Schelling 1989b: 15.

(FD, SW 1.4: 405; Schelling 2001b: 392). If the task of philosophy is to grasp a particular by connecting it with the absolute as its principle, then it cannot accomplish this task unless in one and the same act of comprehension it comprehends both (1) how everything is in principle *one* and (2) how within this absolute unity every *particular* form is, as particular, *distinct* from every other, while still sharing with all these others the same absolute essence or reality.

Schelling's name for the kind of cognition that is involved in philosophical construction is "*urbildliche*" cognition (FD, SW 1.4: 347), and it should be obvious that such cognition is not simply a component of philosophical construction, but is *identical* with it. Both "construction" and "*urbildliche* cognition" designate one and the same thing: namely, seeing the particular in the universal and doing so in a way that both abolishes and preserves the distinction between the particular and the universal. Insofar as the particular is truly exhibited in the universal, the former displays the absolute in its entirety, and the difference between the two is purely *ideal*. Schelling thus compares the difference between the idea and the absolute to that between an original and a copy, both of which have the same real essence (see FD, SW 1.4: 393–4; Schelling 2001b: 396).

In accordance with this conception of philosophical construction, he redefines construction in his *Vorlesungen über die Methode des akademischen Studiums* not as "exhibition of the particular in the absolute" or "in the universal," but rather as "exhibition of the real in the ideal, of the particular in what is purely and simply universal, in the idea" (VM, SW 1.5: 325; Schelling 1966: 123. See too VM, SW 1.5: 255; Schelling 1966: 49). The task of philosophical construction is to demonstrate – that is to *show in intuition* – how each particular idea is not merely "contained in" but is, at least with respect to its being or essence, "identical to" the absolute. And the way the philosopher accomplishes this is by displaying the relation of each particular idea to all the other ideas, i.e., to the *totality*, of the same. This is why the final product of philosophical construction in the Schellingian sense is not, as with Fichte and other transcendental idealists, an accurate *Bild* of concrete self-consciousness and its world of experience, but rather, a complete and self-enclosed *system of ideas*, in which all differences between "particular unities" are merely ideal, whereas essential reality is one and self-identical. To grasp an idea in this manner, via intellectual intuition, as contained in the absolute, is precisely to *construct* it *as an idea*, and indeed the *only* things that philosophy can truly construct are "ideas" in this sense (CP, SW 1.5: 134; Schelling 2008: 277. See too CP, SW 1.5: 140; Schelling 2008: 289).

VI The *product* of philosophical construction (the System of Identity)

As we have just seen, the necessary result of philosophical construction according to Schelling is the "exhibition in intuition" of a complete totality of "particular unities," a demonstration that reveals not only the internal relation of each of these unities or ideas to the indifferent absolute unity, but also and thereby the relation of each of these ideas to all the other "particular unities." In short, the product of philosophical construction is and must be *a system of ideas*, for this is what one "sees" when one views such particulars "in the universal," i.e., whenever one "constructs" them in intuition.[24]

From this it follows that philosophy itself, insofar as it merely *describes* or *articulates* what it has constructed in intuition, must take a rigorously *systematic form* not for any external reasons, but for purely internal ones. The systematic structure of philosophy is simply a reflection of the systematic structure of the absolute itself, as expressed and cognized in the universe of ideas. "Only for reason," writes Schelling in *Fernere Darstellungen*, "is there one universe; and to grasp something rationally means to grasp it above all as an organic member of an absolute whole, in its necessary connection with the same, and thereby as a reflection of absolute unity" (FD, SW 1.4: 390).[25] To "construct" something philosophically is therefore *simply to see or to recognize its proper place in a larger, systematic whole*.

The systematic structure of philosophy is thus simply a reflection or mirror of the fundamental structure of the universe itself. And the completeness of the former can be insured only by carrying the task of philosophical construction through to the end, that is, by continuing until every *possible* determinate unity has been "constructed" in the absolute[26] – though Schelling has almost nothing to say about how the philosopher is supposed to *know* that he has, in fact, finally constructed all that can ever

[24] See Vater 2000: 223 for a good formulation of the intimate relationship between Schelling's *method* of construction and his *system* of philosophy.

[25] This is the feature of Schellingian construction that is emphasized by Frederick C. Beiser in Beiser 2002.

[26] Admittedly, Schelling is frustratingly vague on this point, but in his lectures on the philosophy of art he writes that "the principle of construction is, in another and higher sense, the same as that of ancient physics, namely, *that nature abhors a vacuum*. Thus wherever there is an empty place in the universe, nature fills it. Less metaphorically expressed, no possibility is left unrealized in the universe; everything that is possible is actual. Since the universe is *one* and indivisible, it cannot flow out into anything without flowing out in its entirety" (PK, SW 1.5: 419; Schelling 1989b: 54).

possibly be constructed. Thus it is not surprising that he uses the same word – "construction" – to designate both the *method* by means of which the philosopher intuits the innermost nature of the absolute *and* the *systematic structure* of his Philosophy of Identity.

VII The *truth* and *reality* of philosophical construction

The task of philosophy, Schelling recognizes, is certainly not "that one should *simply* construct *anything whatsoever*; instead, the point is that it has to be constructed *correctly*" (AAE, AA 1.10: 100). The process we have been describing, though it is freely accomplished by the philosopher when he "constructs" his system, must therefore not be understood as in any sense a "fictional" one, in which the philosopher's constructions have validity and reality only in the context of his own project of construction. On the contrary, philosophical construction of the Schellingian variety must be understood as the indispensable means by which the philosopher *recognizes* an eternal reality that is in no sense dependent upon his individual construction of it.[27]

Whereas the philosopher exhibits the ideas in the absolute, the absolute, for its part, may also be said to "exhibit itself" in the ideas. As Schelling puts it, the absolute posits itself both objectively and subjectively, as both infinite and finite (that is to say, both as the indifferent universal and as the totality of particular unities or ideas), and it posits both in a single act (FD, SW 1.4: 391n.; Schelling 2001b: 384n.). This is the process that Schelling calls "the mystery of creation," a process through which the absolute posits itself not as one but as many and knows the many as itself. To further characterize this rather mysterious process, this "act by which the absolute subject objectifies itself" (VM, SW 1.5: 325; Schelling 1966: 123), Schelling often employs the difficult term *Ineinbildung* or *Einbildung* ("in-forming," "identification," "forming into one," "imaging," "imagining"). Though this term certainly recalls, as it is surely meant to, the function assigned to *produktive Einbildungskraft* (productive imagination) in Kant's and

[27] Temilo van Zantwijk proposes a very different interpretation of Schelling's conception of philosophical construction, according to which the latter is supposed to *constitute* its objects, the sole reality of which always remains dependent upon the philosopher's construction of them (van Zantwijk 2001: 108–11). He fails, however, to provide any convincing evidence for this interpretation and seriously misreads the passages he does cite. There is, to be sure, a real sense in which philosophical, like geometrical, construction *proves* the existence of its objects, but to concede *this* is by no means to concede that the *reality* of such objects *depends upon* the philosopher's proof of the same via construction. And indeed, it would appear impossible to reconcile such a thesis with Schelling's "Platonic" commitment to the independent reality of the absolute and the ideas.

Fichte's accounts of the transcendental constitution of experience, for Schelling it does not refer to the world-constituting activity of the cognizing subject, but rather to something much more "objective," to that process of *Subject-Objectivirung* by means of which the absolute becomes, for itself, an absolute object. Thus, employing language that harkens back to one of his very first literary efforts, his juvenile essay on Plato's *Timaeus*, Schelling describes the process in question as "the divine in-forming of original and copy that is the true root of every being" (FD, SW 1.4: 394; Schelling 2001b: 386).[28]

In the end, the only reason it is even possible to engage in philosophical construction in the Schellingian sense, the only reason it is possible for the philosopher to "exhibit" the particular in the universal, is because such a way of considering the particular and the absolute simply expresses or reflects the extra-philosophical truth about both. The absolute is present from the start, in its entirety, within everything, even though we first cognize it, indirectly and obscurely, only as an abstract concept of the understanding and then, subsequently and more adequately, as a necessary idea of reason, and finally – through direct intellectual intuition – as the absolute itself, which is always present within each of these ideal determinations. When we have finally arrived at this final point, which is of course precisely where philosophy *begins*, then we are for the first time able to grasp that both ideas and finite things possess reality (if indeed, the latter can actually be said to possess any reality at all) only in their relationship of identity with the absolute, which is the ground of all reality. By means of philosophical construction, therefore, we finally succeed in grasping particulars as they really are and have always been: as universals in their own right and as comprised in the absolute, of which each determinate idea is no more than a "particular schematism," *als Formen göttlicher Einbildung*, determinate forms of the "divine in-forming" (FD, SW 1.4: 395; Schelling 2001b: 387).

What the philosopher accomplishes through his constructions in intuition is *consciously to reintegrate* the multiplicity of ideas into that absolute unity from which they originally proceed. Thus, if we can

[28] To further complicate matters, Schelling also uses the term *Einbildung* on at least one occasion to describe the philosopher's "construction" of the idea (see CP, SW 1.5: 135; Schelling 2008: 278). For an insightful analysis of his use of the terms *Ineinbildung* and *Einbildung* (and the relation of the same to Fichte's *Einbildungskraft*) see Marquet 1968: 238–59. For a rather different interpretation of the *Ineinbilden* as the "l'autoschématisation de l'Absolut" within the context of Schelling's "transcendental theogeny" (understood as the process through which the absolute gives birth to the infinite totality of particular ideas), see Maesschalck 1997.

describe the absolute as "expressing itself" or "flowing out into" the particular ideas, we can, in turn, describe philosophy as "the accomplished shaping into one or in-forming [*Einbildung*] of the particular in the universal, or as the dissolving of the former into the latter" (VNP, SW 1.5: 122–3; Schelling 1985: 378–9).

Though it may at first have seemed as if the indifferent absolute with which we began our philosophizing was a purely abstract and empty formal self-identity, philosophical construction reveals that this was *never* the case. By "exhibiting the particular in the universal" the philosopher comes to realize for himself what the absolute was for itself from the start: namely, a unity containing within itself multiplicity; not just a formal *identity*, but a real *totality*. But of course, only those who have actually *constructed for themselves* the manifold of ideas in the manner described by Schelling, only those who have actually *seen for themselves* this absolute unity of unity and multiplicity, of universality and particularity, will be able to grasp this vital truth: namely, that one cannot truly cognize the particular unless one can cognize the absolute as its principle *and* that one cannot truly grasp the absolute without grasping how the unity of the same comprehends a totality of distinct, ideal forms (i.e., the universe of ideas). What is *demonstrated* or *exhibited* through such construction is thus the very same thing that was merely *asserted* by absolute cognition when it first arrived at the standpoint of reason: namely, the "absolute *unity of the ideal and the real*" (FD, SW 1.4: 406; Schelling 2001b: 393). It is one thing simply to *proclaim* "*hen kai pan*," but it is something else altogether to *demonstrate for oneself* the truth of this claim by means of philosophical construction.

The philosopher who has accomplished this task of construction does not simply *assume* or *suppose* that his constructions correspond to the structure of ultimate reality. On the contrary, what justifies his claim that they do is the same thing that justifies those of the geometer concerning the truth and universal validity of his claims: namely, the incontrovertible and immediate self-evidence that accompanies anything that is constructed in and for pure intuition. The *truth* of Schelling's System of Identity is therefore supposed to be vouchsafed by the *method* of the same. "In philosophical construction it is purely by means of intellectual intuition that absolute cognition is also recognized to be what is preeminently real, the absolute itself, and it is by this means as well that the modes of this cognizing are recognized to be the only true and real things" (FD, SW 1.4: 370; Schelling 2001b: 382–3). Thus, as Schelling himself clearly recognizes, in committing oneself to the method of construction as he understands it, one commits oneself at the same time to affirming the identity of the ideal

and the real – in short, to what Schelling calls "*absolute idealism*, in which absolute reality is given immediately with absolute ideality" (CP, SW 1.5: 136; Schelling 2008: 278).

Thus, even though Schelling had previously conceded that the ultimate test of the correctness of his own Philosophy of Nature could rest only upon the correspondence between what is constructed therein and nature itself as revealed through experience (AAE, AA 1.10: 99–100. See too EE, SW 1.3: 20; Schelling 2004: 19), he now shrinks from applying this same test to the even more ambitious constructions found in the Philosophy of Identity. Instead, he now insists that philosophy should pay no heed whatsoever to empirical evidence, inasmuch as the sensible world of appearances is simply less "real" than the intelligible world of ideas, with the construction of which philosophy is exclusively concerned. On this point, his Platonic predilections are unmistakably clear: the real world is the world of ideas that is directly intuited by reason, not the sensible world of appearances, and it would be absurd to pretend to measure the former by its conformity with the latter.

VIII The unteachable, innate *capacity* for intellectual intuition and philosophical construction (philosophical genius)

The motto of philosophy, according to Schelling, is "*odi profanum vulgus et arceo*": "I hate the unhallowed crowd and bid it keep out" (VM, SW 1.5: 261; Schelling 1966: 55, quoting Horace, *Odes* III, 1). The method of construction employed within the System of Identity is thus *not for everyone*, inasmuch as it presupposes a "capacity for grasping the absolute" that simply *cannot be learned* (VM, SW 1.5: 266; Schelling 1966: 60. See too FD, SW 1.4: 350–60; Schelling 2001b: 376–7), but must simply be present in advance. To be sure, simple possession of the raw talent in question is not enough to make one a philosopher – for this one must first cultivate and develop one's innate capacity – but the capacity itself must already be present "as something already decided, concerning which no doubt is allowed" (FD, SW 1.4: 361; Schelling 2001b: 376). The simple truth of the matter, at least according to Schelling, is that not everyone possesses the innate capacity in question. Some people simply lack altogether the requisite "inner organ of intuition." No matter how hard they may struggle to lift themselves by their bootstraps, they will never attain the standpoint of reason, and no matter how diligently they may squint their inner eyes, they will never be able to "exhibit the particular in the universal." Such people, says Schelling, are simply

anschauungslos, and when presented with instances where philosophical construction is required, they will be "unable to construct anything or to combine anything spontaneously" (VM, SW 1.5: 243; Schelling 1966: 36. See too VM, SW 1.5: 256; Schelling 1966: 49).

Nor did Schelling think that those who lack the necessary organ of intellectual intuition were likely to be able to *acquire* it through study and practice. Indeed he often seems blithely unconcerned with addressing the problems and confusions of anyone not already securely situated at the "standpoint of reason." He does occasionally suggest that one way to lead those not already at the standpoint of reason toward the same is by sharpening the opposition between the kind of "absolute cognition" presupposed by the Philosophy of Identity and all other kinds of cognition, particularly the kind associated with the "mere understanding" and its "standpoint of reflection," thereby helping them to see for themselves the inadequacies of and oppositions contained within the latter (see VM, SW 1.5: 248–9; Schelling 1966: 42–3).[29] And on occasion he also praises the study of mathematics as a useful propadeutic to philosophy, but he seems to have had little confidence in either of these programs of pre-philosophical education and, beyond this, he utterly fails to provide any positive guidance for the perplexed, would-be philosopher of identity.[30]

It should therefore come as no surprise to learn that Schelling did not customarily give introductory lectures on philosophy, nor offer colloquia for beginning students, nor publish popular writings designed "to force the reader to understand." On the contrary, he ridiculed the concerns of certain other, unnamed philosophers about the apparent incapacity of some people to do philosophy; indeed, he actively opposed their efforts to provide such people with some means of access to philosophy and recommended, instead, "cutting off sharply any access to philosophy and isolating it on every flank from ordinary knowledge, so that there is no road or path leading from it to philosophy." The philosopher, he bluntly maintained, should simply declare that "here is where philosophy starts,

[29] As Ernst Cassirer notes, the only arguments Schelling ever provides for his way of proceeding are purely *negative* ones, consisting in criticism of other ways of proceeding, as found in empiricism, mechanism, and, in general, the philosophy of reflection. See Cassirer 1974: 259–60. On this same point, see too Verra 1979: 38.

[30] One of the chief deficiencies of Schelling's theory of construction is his refusal to take seriously the "problem of the starting point," the problem of how to move from the ordinary standpoint to the standpoint of reason. As Michael Vater has observed, Schelling has virtually nothing to say about this issue, nor does he offer any account of how and why the standpoint of reflection and understanding arises *within and from* the absolute in the first place (something that Fichte, of course, goes to great lengths to explain). See Vater 2000: 228–9.

and anyone who is not already at this point or who shrinks from it should stay away or go back to from where he came" (FD, SW 1.4: 362; Schelling 2001b: 377).[31]

Rejecting all propadeutic measures as ultimately in vain, Schelling simply implores his reader "intellectually to intuit the indifference of the ideal and the real immediately in yourself, in absolute cognition: this is the beginning and first step of philosophy" (FD, SW 1.4: 348). If one requests assistance in doing this, then all Schelling can tell him is that this is, alas, not an ability that can be *taught*, at least not by philosophy (See FD, SW 1.4: 361; Schelling 2001b: 377). Not everyone will be able to lift himself to the standpoint of reason, which is the standpoint from which philosophical construction first becomes *possible*, just as not everyone possesses the "instrument" or "organ" by means of which such construction becomes *actual:* namely, "the capacity to see the universal in the particular, the infinite in the finite, the two combined into a living unity" (FD, SW 1.4: 362; Schelling 2001b: 377). Just as some people are born without the organ of external vision, so, believed Schelling, some are born without that of intellectual intuition and hence without the innate capacity for *urbildliche* cognition.

IX Conclusion

Let us conclude with three questions concerning Schelling's new conception of philosophical construction:

(1) How is Schelling's constructive *method* of philosophizing related to the original self-construction of philosophy's *object*, whether the I or the absolute?

Not only does Schelling rely upon construction as his *method* for philosophizing, but he also claims that the *object* of his philosophy – the self-identical absolute – must also be understood "constructively," that is to say, as having in some sense *originally constructed itself*, prior to and independently of the philosopher's theoretical construction of the same. This raises many difficult questions concerning the similarities and

[31] One must therefore agree with Jürgen Weber's judgment that Schelling's project of philosophical construction, for all of its importance for his philosophy of identity, remained little more than a vague program (Weber 1995: 98), as well as with Bernard Taureck's complaint that Schelling utterly fails to provide any *foundation* for this notion of construction and mainly just repeats over and over the alleged *results* of the same (Taureck 1975: 259) – a complaint with which most readers of Schelling will surely concur.

differences between these two "constructions," and one may be tempted to resolve these questions by thinking of the philosopher's activity as simply a "reconstruction" of the original "self-construction" of the absolute. Schelling, however, resists such a description, and he does so for a good reason.

Schelling, as we have seen, is unambiguously committed to the *reality* of that process of *Ineinbildung* by means of which the absolute differentiates itself into the ideas, and thus he affirms the *real self-construction* of the particulars in the universal, and (at least on most occasions) he seems to understand this as a process wholly distinct from the philosopher's construction of the same.[32] Thus the philosopher's construction, his exhibition of the particular (the idea) in the universal (the absolute), is perhaps best understood as a purely *ideal* construction (or reconstruction), one that follows a path that is just the *reverse* of the one followed by the absolute in its *real* self-construction.

Though Schelling sometimes appears to endorse such an interpretation of the relationship between these two "constructions," this only raises new questions and problems concerning his method. One of these concerns the relationship between, on the one hand, the absolute's original self-construction, which Schelling sometimes describes as a unified process, the *real* aspect of which is the self-identical absolute and the *ideal* aspect of which is to be found in the particular unities or ideas, and, on the other, that *rational* or *absolute cognition* with which philosophy is supposed to commence. In several places, most notably in *Darstellung meines Systems* and in the first section of *Fernere Darstellungen*, Schelling characterizes "absolute cognition" as the philosopher's immediate and intuitive cognition of the point of indifference with which the entire system begins. Such cognition, maintains Schelling, is not really *external* to its object (the absolute) but is instead an essential *aspect* of the same; indeed, it is *identical* with it. The absolute is thus not "absolute" at all unless – to recall Aristotle

[32] A recent school of interpretation has challenged this claim and maintains, quite implausibly, that both the absolute and the universe of ideas are, in fact, first *constituted* in and by philosophical construction. Here I am referring to the work of Hermann Krings (See Krings 1982: 350; Krings 1985: 111–28) and others (Löw 1979 and Boenke 1990) who minimize the "realistic" side of Schelling's account of construction and propose to interpret it instead strictly as a process of "logo-genesis," that is, as the external application of a "logic" that allows the philosopher to incorporate some determinate particular into a pre-existing conceptual scheme (the universal). Indeed, though such an interpretation, which treats "ideas" as quasi-concepts, mediating between sensible particulars and the absolute, certainly has its appeal, it is very difficult if not impossible to reconcile it with Schelling's strong and repeated emphasis upon the purely *intuitive* character of philosophical construction and with the *reality* he associates with products of the latter. This kind of purely "logical" interpretation of Schelling's conception of construction has in turn been subjected to withering criticism by Jürgen Weber (Weber 1995: 100).

and to anticipate Hegel – it also "knows itself as the absolute." This claim, however, is difficult to reconcile with the previously indicated *distinction* between the philosopher's construction of the ideas (that is, his cognition of the absolute) and the absolute's own self-construction, just as it also calls into doubt the *independent reality* of the absolute.

(2) Is Schelling's method "circular"? (What is the relation between his metaphysics and his epistemology?)

Schelling's symmetrical account of the relationship of philosophical construction to the original self-construction of the absolute also harbors a certain tension with respect to what guarantees the *truth* of the latter. On the one hand, construction in intuition is supposed to be self-evidently true and thus to require no confirmation from anything outside itself; on the other, the truth of what is constructed by the philosopher is, as Schelling sometimes explicitly suggests, confirmed or verified by its *correspondence* with the original self-construction of the universe, that is, with the universe of ideas. The tension between these two views of the relationship between philosophical construction of the absolute and the absolute's own self-construction points to a deeper, underlying *circularity* in Schelling's account: if philosophical construction is in some sense *confirmed* by the reality of the ideas, and yet if the ideas are, in turn, *accessible* to us *only* by means of philosophical construction, then the whole doctrine of the ideas and the absolute begins to resemble a self-confirming feedback loop.[33]

One way to thematize the tension we have been discussing between the method of philosophy and the object of the same is to characterize the ambiguity concerning how to understand this relationship as betraying an uncertainty concerning the proper relationship of *epistemology* to *metaphysics*. Whereas most modern philosophers, starting with Descartes, have affirmed a certain *primacy* of the former over the latter, Schelling, following self-consciously in the footsteps of Plato and Spinoza, generally *reverses* this relationship and affirms the philosophical primacy of metaphysics over epistemology (even while affirming the identity of knowing and being in the absolute). And surely it is plausible to attribute many of the obscurities we have highlighted in Schelling's "contemplative" method of philosophical construction and the strikingly repetitive and unsatisfactory character of his explanations of this procedure in comparison with the richness of his descriptions of the absolute itself and of the teeming universe of ideas and potencies associated with it as a consequence of his privileging of

[33] Cf. Verra 1979: 38 and Cassirer 1974: 259.

metaphysics over epistemology and of his failure to provide a convincing defense of the truth of these claims.[34]

(3) How is one to *evaluate* philosophical constructs based on the "self-evidence" of "intellectual intuition"?

Schelling claims that "we are by no means concerned with *simply* constructing *anything whatsoever*; instead, our concern is that it be constructed *correctly*" (AAE, AA 1.10: 100). But precisely *how* is one to determine whether the System of Identity has indeed been "constructed correctly," if, in the end, the sole criterion that Schelling recognizes and invokes for judging the correctness of his philosophical assertions and constructions is the alleged self-evidence of intellectual intuition?

How is one to evaluate such claims? Can we stipulate in this case as well that it is not enough simply to *have* an intellectual intuition, but that what is needed is a *correct* one? Surely not, since the whole *point* of basing philosophy upon the evidence of intellectual intuition is that such evidence is *always* supposed to be *immediate* and *indefeasible*. For anyone who actually *has* such an intellectual intuition there can simply be *no question* concerning the alethic status of the same, which is always supposed to wear its truth on its sleeve, as it were.

Surely it is unnecessary to catalogue the potential dangers of relying upon such a method of "exhibition in intuition," utterly uncontrolled by anything outside itself, including the laws of *thinking*. If construction in intuition comes down in the end to nothing but entertaining a certain *immediate vision of reality*, accompanied by the heartfelt assurance that *every* properly qualified person can and must share this vision, then what happens when this simply proves not to be the case? What happens if others report a *different* intellectual vision of the absolute and of the ideas of reason? Or what if they report no "vision" of these at all? In the eyes of many a skeptically inclined reader, Schelling's comments concerning the similarities between his own constructions as a philosopher and the *insight* of the mystics and the *inspiration* of the poets serve not as evidence of the profundity of the Philosophy of Identity but as red flags of caution.

Schelling, of course, would not be deterred by such caveats. To paraphrase Kant's polemical attack on certain self-styled neo-Platonists of his own day, *soi-disant* "men of genius" and "philosophers of intuition," who profess nothing but contempt for the hard work of philosophical thinking

[34] Limnatis suggests that in this Schelling turns epistemology into metaphysics of a pre-Kantian type. See Limnatis 2008: 127.

and who conduct their own demonstrations "from the top down," thanks to their "inner oracle" of "divine intuition": *if someone is determined to believe in such an oracle, no one can stop him*.[35] Or, as Nietzsche puts it: "The concepts 'true' and 'untrue' have, as it seems to me, no meaning in optics."[36]

[35] *Von einem neuerdings erhobenen vornehmen Ton in der Philosophie* [1786], Kant AA 08: 406.
[36] "Epilogue," Nietzsche 1968: 647.

CHAPTER 6

"Identity of identity and non-identity": Schelling's path to the "absolute system of identity"

Manfred Frank

Translated by Ian Alexander Moore

In his *Differenzschrift* Hegel tried to sum up the central thought of Schelling's philosophy by characterizing it as "the identity of identity and non-identity,"[1] and Schelling himself not only accepted this characterization of his Absolute System of Identity without demurral, but enthusiastically endorsed it.[2]

Hegel did not take "the identity of identity and non-identity" to be an original insight which he had come up with on his own, but rather simply as the expression of the basic idea his friend had in mind when he spoke, as he repeatedly did, of "the identity of identity"[3] or of "identity duplicated within itself."[4] As a first approximation one might try to understand what is going on here as follows: Schelling and Hegel are both of the opinion that identity and non-identity – or, as Hegel, using the good old "Wolffian-Kantian" concepts of reflection, also puts it in the passage just cited "being opposed to" and "being one with"[5] – are ways of describing the same unitary whole. Schelling and Hegel, to be sure, hold different views about this whole. Schelling believes that the overarching identity cannot be explained in terms of the relation between identity and difference subordinated under it. Hegel, on the other hand, thinks that this is precisely how they must be explained. Hegel and Schelling, once again following Wolff and his school, use the term "reflection" to refer to the activity of relating things to each other so as to consider whether they are the same (identical) or not the same (non-identical). So one can describe Hegel's deviation from Schelling as consisting in the claim that reflection must be construed as fully autarchic. In publications between 1802 and 1804 Schelling accuses Hegel (in effect) of using the concept of "identity"

[1] HW 02:96.
[2] Letter to Fichte, Jena, October 3, 1801: AA III. 2.1: 378; cf. Fichte's reply on January 15, 1802: AA III. 2.1: 403f.; SW 1.4: 236 [ff.]; Schelling 1946: 63; Schelling 1988b: 34; *passim*.
[3] SW 1.4: 121f.; Schelling 1988b: 34, 50; SW 1.6: 165, 168, 173, 187.
[4] SW 1.6: 117; 1.7: 424f.; 1.8: 216; 1.10: 103. [5] Hegel 1977b: 156.

ambiguously: sometimes "identity" refers to the overarching whole, but sometimes it designates something which is a mere *relatum* within that whole. In fact, Hegel's explanation of what nature is dissolves the identity of nature and mind. He believes, after all, that nature can be fully explained by reference to its identity to the mind provided one understands that mind is absolute reflection; this amounts to an idealist denial that nature is independent of mind. "Difference is the whole and also a moment of that whole, just as identity is both its whole and a moment of it."[6] This is the meaning of the famous phrase "the concept extends itself and its power over" its other, so that this "other" gives up its independence to the singular whole designated by the concept, and thus the singular whole in an asymmetrically distorted way comes to dominate that other.[7]

I shall now discuss which problem of modern philosophy Hegel and Schelling claim to have solved with their formula "the identity of identity and non-identity" (section I). Then I shall discuss the stages through which Schelling's thinking, and following him that of Hegel, progressed, until he eventually reached his mature position, and which of the insights of his predecessors he incorporated into that position (section II). In sections III and IV, I shall explicate the formula "identity duplicated within itself"; only when I have done that shall I be able to show in what way conceptualizing the mind–body problem in terms of this formula would actually contribute to a clarification of the discussion. In section V, I connect all the strands I developed earlier in the essay so as to bring out clearly the basic structure of Schelling's mature Philosophy of Identity. Finally (section VI), I discuss the reasons that eventually made Schelling unwilling to associate himself with the interpretation of his position his friend Hegel proposed. Hegel thought his proposal was a constructive way of helping Schelling.

I Schelling's theory of identity in light of his early modern predecessors

First, it is necessary to understand properly the meaning of the term "identity," which must be counted among the most obscure in the philosophical lexicon. Leibniz's principle of the identity of indiscernibles

[6] HW 06: 47.

[7] "The universal is therefore *free* power; it is itself while reaching out to its other and embracing it . . . Just as it has been called free power, it could also be called free love and boundless blessedness, for it relates to *that which is distinct from it* as *to itself*; in it, it has returned to itself" (HW 06: 244; Hegel 2010: 532).

was the first systematic attempt to bring method to the application of the sign of identity. It was also Leibniz who addressed the problem with two different answers, which belong to different discourses. The first is logical, the second metaphysical (or ontological).[8] In the first, the form of the sentence (or judgment) is reflected on; in the second, objects of the real world are treated. In the first, Leibniz claims that two terms are identical if they can be replaced by one another without losing their truth value (*salva veritate*).[9] The second, known as the "principle of indiscernibles" [*principe des indiscernables*], is ontological and speaks about natural substances. Regarding it, he explains, "it is not true that two substances can resemble each other completely and differ only in number [*solo numero*]."[10] These two applications of the principle of identity – the logical and the ontological – must be carefully disentangled; one can even doubt whether it is actually a matter of one and the same law.[11] Schelling and Hegel, at any

[8] Both are commonly confused with one another under the simplifying title "Leibniz's law." Lorenz 1969 clarifies the difference and connection between them. Cf. also the short, but classic essay by Grelling 1936.

[9] Leibniz 1849–63: VII, 219, 228; Leibniz 1903: 240, 362f., 519f.

[10] *Discourse on Metaphysics*, §9, Leibniz 1989: 41–2; "qu'il n'est pas vray que deux substances se ressemblent entierement [c'est-à-dire selon toutes leurs dénominations intrinsèques], et soyent differentes *solo numero*" (*Discours de Métaphysique*, §9). Cf. *Monadologie*, §9. An abbreviated version of the (ontologically employed) principle of identity can be found in the Ontology Part of Baumgarten's *Metaphysica* (Baumgarten 1757: §38; Kant AA 17: 36; I cite according to the – typically short – paragraphs of the original Latin edition, when nothing else is noted.): "Si in A sunt, quae in B, A et B sunt EADEM. Non eadem sunt DIVERSA (alia)." Today one would say: If A and B are equal, the following equivalence is valid: "(F) (Fa ⇔ Fb)," or, "a is numerically identical with b, if *all and only the* properties/predicates that (as Baumgarten, in regard to the concept's intension, says) are *in* a are also *in* b." More simply, one can say that *every* predicate that pertains to a must also pertain to b.

[11] An objection to Leibniz's undifferentiated equal treatment of logical and ontological identity extends from Clarke through Hume, Kant, Peirce, and Wittgenstein to Max Black and Alfred Ayer. It goes like this: Were the identity of natural objects to be justified logically, the justification would occur a priori. Yet, in the case of identification of natural objects, which exist independently of our mind, we cannot disregard number and spatio-temporal position. Thus we can imagine without contradiction a symmetrical world in which objects that are, with respect to their "intrinsic designations" [*dénominations intrinsèques*], indistinguishable nevertheless appear distinguished according to number, space, and time, as, for instance, right- or left-handed molecules. (It has turned out that, e.g., turpentine oil turns counterclockwise and watery solutions of raw sugar turn clockwise; cf. Linus Pauling 1969: 137). Leibniz's law of identity is not subtle enough for such distinctions. For "intrinsic designations" [*dénominations intrinsèques*] are expressed by predicates (general terms) without the help of singular terms (demonstrative pronouns or proper names).

If one, under these circumstances, renounces a logical definition of identity, then identification transforms into an empirical problem à la Hume or Kant: That we call two natural objects (or one object over time) identical means simply that our physical parameters and our five senses are not by chance precise enough to be able to distinguish them.

As for the talk of the identity of abstract objects, by contrast (e.g., numbers, geometrical figures), there are passages in which Leibniz himself appears to deny its sense. Examples in Lorenz 1969: 153ff.

rate, adopt Leibniz's wavering between semantics and ontology, insofar as they believe that sometimes the subject and the predicate, sometimes the subject and the object, are identified by the "is."

David Hume was the first to express doubts about the sense of this distinction (in the realm of natural objects). Semantic equivalence takes place only in the realm of "relations of ideas," especially in logic.[12] In the ontology of natural objects there can, in the strict sense, be no talk of identity. Hume insists on the fact that, in the expression "equal with itself" the object designated by the reflexive pronoun must be different in some respect from the object designated directly (otherwise the judgment would be saying the same thing twice, thus saying nothing).[13] From this objection, which ultimately makes identity undecidable, Kant then drew the consequences for the status of the unity of the principle of his theoretical philosophy, of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness remains analytically one and the same (and can be singled out analytically as this one in every thought belonging to the I), yet also withstands the change of its states by "maintaining itself" – "synthetically" – as the same in the transition from one to the other. Thus Kant proposes – invoking Hume and opposing Leibniz – to separate the (ontological) principle of identity from the (logical) principle of non-contradiction. The latter means that one cannot at the same time assert and deny something (or: that one cannot at the same time posit a thing [*Sache*] with its opposite); the former claims that something cannot be called identical when its properties change.[14] The (logical) principle of non-contradiction is self-evident (it is trivial); according to the (ontological) principle of identity, identity forms *a genuine relation between two things* that are not obviously one. To identify something with something means, then, to acquire some actual knowledge, while judging without contradiction is something self-evident. Consequently, identity (in opposition to logical freedom from contradiction) appears to include a sort of difference. It is more or less in this way that we have to represent to ourselves the problem area from which Schelling's famous thesis about the identity between nature and mind takes its point of departure.

Already in the hastily written *Darstellung meines Systems der Philosophie* (1801), Schelling articulates under three aspects the thought of an identity that is sensitive to difference: that of the essence [*Wesen*] or the identical itself; that of the sentence form A = A, in which the essence or the

[12] Section IV, Part I of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. [13] Hume 1888: 200, 201.
[14] A precise analysis of this Kantian conception can be found in Henrich 1976, 1988.

identical itself is expressed (with the sentence form there comes into play a virtual, but – as Schelling says – not yet "actuated" opposition); that of the formula A = B, which first actualizes the opposition and which envisages a genuine becoming unequal of equal things. Yet all these determinations are considered as developments of one and the same according to its various aspects, so that what the "identical" means belongs to the same "whole" as difference. With this we encounter the expression of the "identity of identity and non-identity, being opposed and being one,"[15] which Hegel introduced in the *Differenzschrift* to clarify his friend's formula ("identity of identity" [SW 1.4: 121; 1.6: 165, 173, 187] or "duplicated identity" [SW 1.7: 424f.; 1.8: 216, 4n.; 1.10: 103]).[16] Is this formula less paradoxical than its (irrelational and relational) predecessors were? To dispel this suspicion was a chief interest of the Schellingian Philosophy of Identity. It attempts to conceive "identity" in such a way that in this relation two different things [*zwei Verschiedene*] (A and B) pertain entirely to one and the same thing [*Sache*]. With this, it takes on the Humean challenge, which had indeed said that identifying a thing [*Ding*] with itself in a non-trivial manner means presupposing that it differs in at least one aspect. However, while Hume's argument leads to the skeptical denial of the ascertainability of identity in general, Schelling attempts to show that the thought of change in general can only develop in the thought of the unity of something that is the same [*eines Selbigen*]. Only what *could* be *another*, only with respect to this, does it make sense to say that it is *equal with itself* [*sich selbst gleich*].

> Under its equality with itself [says Schelling], the ability to become unequal with itself is hidden. This possibility lies hidden in the unity; indeed, the thing which is equal with itself is the thing that has the ability to be unequal with itself; accordingly, it already includes the possibility within itself to step outside of itself. (Schelling 1989a: 49)

II Philosophical and historical influences on the development of Schelling's theory of identity

I now want to examine several presuppositions – including historical ones – that influenced Schelling's mature Philosophy of Identity.

(1) First there is Schelling's early preoccupation with the speculative, Schwabian pietists, especially Oetinger and Hahn, which goes back to his time with Köstlin and in the Nürtingen Latin school. Schelling was

[15] Hegel 1977b: 156. [16] HW 02: 96 in context.

personally acquainted with Hahn and had composed a precocious funeral elegy for him in 1790 (AA 1.1: 43ff.).[17] Oetinger and Hahn solve a fundamental problem of their thinking, namely, the "connection between a divine and a necessary causality through a middle," with reference to the *Timaeus* (68e5–69a1) and the *Philebus* (16c5–e5). The "mediating third" of the *Philebus* is merely another name for that "indissoluble . . . bond [*Band*]" of which the *Timaeus* (31c) speaks and which connects not only what is bound, but also itself with what is bound.[18] The creation of the world follows from the sublation [*Aufhebung*] of the original "indifference" of the parts in favor of an actuated[19] antagonism between the forces of nature: a schema that Schelling was able to relate easily to Kant's mediation of two types of causality in the thought of natural self-organization (Schelling 1994: 33 [ff.]).

In notes taken even prior to the *Form-Schrift*, and which appeared in 1994 under the title *Timaeus* (1794), Kant's conception of organism ("being reciprocally the cause and effect of itself"[20]) is overlaid with that of the *Timaeus* description of the "most beautiful of all bonds." This bond [*desmos*], which spiritualizes [*vergeistet*] the organism, connects, as Schelling, encouraged meanwhile by Hegel, formulates it in 1806, "essence as one with itself, as a multiple [*ein Wesen als Eines mit ihm selbst, als einem Vielen*]" (SW 1.7: 55ff.; 1.2: 365). The little conceptual word "as" states the particular perspective; and the formulation "of itself" [*von sich selbst*] provides for the fact that the one and that which is different from it (inadequately designated by "a multiple")[21] are themselves again considered as one and the same. Identity is "duplicated" in itself. (Not until the *Würzburg System* of 1804 does Schelling speak of absolute identity as that in which content and form, the affirming and the affirmed, are so "*of themselves*," so that affirming and being affirmed can be distinguished only quantitatively, in accordance with the perspectives of outweighing and receding, but not essentially (SW 1.6: 162ff.).)

[17] Matthews 2011: ch. 2.

[18] For Schelling's reference to this "mediating third," see especially SW 1.7: 54–61; 1.2: 55; 360ff.

[19] Schelling conceives undifferentiatedness as a merely conceptual or *potential* distinction between the real and the ideal ("[w]e do not have three essences [*Wesen*], but rather only ***one*** *threefold* essence" [SW 11.3: 236]). Not until one transitions *a potentia in actum* (into *actual* being [*Sein*]) does it press its other out of its own sphere, and the connection between both becomes an actual one, as contiguity, sequence, or causality are (especially clear in the late work, e.g., SW 11.3: 75ff.; 212ff.; 291ff.).

[20] KU §64, Kant AA 5: 370, *passim*.

[21] Multiplicity is a subcategory of quantity; identity and difference are determinations of reflection.

(2) It is not easy to see that, even in his *Form-Schrift*, which was written a little later, Schelling is trying to resolve the same problem. At that time it seemed to him to follow from the structure of absoluteness as a mode of positing-itself-as-itself that the absolute could not be revealed in the category of substance or in that of causality, but only in the reciprocal relation of substances causally interacting with each other ("reciprocity" [*Wechselwirkung*]). The genuine "primordial form" of philosophy must constitute a third power which encompasses both a form subordinate to it and a content, and connects both of these *with itself* (SW 1.1: 96f.). In doing so, Schelling makes reference to a famous passage in the *Timaeus* (31c), which Hegel will translate (clumsily) in the *Differenzschrift*.[22] Only in the shape of the category that embraces substance and asymmetrical relation can unity and difference be made intelligible, so that what Schelling from 1796 calls "spirit" [*Geist*][23] must be a unity of unity and difference. "[H]uman mind," he writes, is "a *nature organizing itself*" (SW 1.1: 386); and: "I call *spirit* what is only *its own* object" (SW 1.1: 366). In this reflexive doubling lies the fact that the other of mind is again only mind itself, the fact that spirit consequently is all beings [*Seiende*]. Plato's discussion of the "world-soul" and Kant's concept of an "organism" were thus equally influential models for Schelling's theory of "absolute spirit." As late as *Ideas* and *The System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800) Schelling thought that Kant justified speaking of "being-at-the-same-time-cause-and-effect *of itself*" by reference to his third category of relations; he didn't yet realize that Kant really took "being-at-the-same-time-cause-and-effect *of itself*" to be an "idea," not a category. Because he misunderstood Kant in this way, he supposed that Kant also made the mistake of construing

[22] "[To bring two things together without a third is not possible; for there must rather be between them a bond (*desmos*) that holds them together.] The truly beautiful bond is that which makes itself and what it binds one [. . .] For whenever, of any three numbers, or masses, or forces, the middle is such that what the first is for it, it is for the last, and conversely, what the last is for the middle, the middle is just that for the first, then since the middle has become the first and last, and the last and first conversely, have both become the middle, in this way they will all necessarily be the same; but things which are the same as against each other are all one" ([Hegel 1977b: 158n., starting from "The truly beautiful . . . – Trans.]; *Timaeus*, 31c–32a; in HW 02: 97f.; cf. with this a passage about the bond that sounds quite similar, which connects the idea of the whole with the "reciprocity of the parts" "*through a third*, to whose representations both, matter and concept, belong." This third is called "spirit" (SW 1.2: 42 [my italics]).

[23] [In this essay, the German word *Geist* is in most instances translated as "mind." In some instances it is translated as "spirit" in order to emphasize that for Schelling the overarching unity of mind and nature is not reducible to just "mind" in the narrow sense. – Ed.] For Schelling, nature is the identity of nature and mind "under a minor exponent of ideality" while mind *sensu stricto* is this selfsame identity "raised to a higher power of ideality." Only spirit [*Geist*] understood as the Platonic *ontôs on* is the strict sense of identity, relationlessness, or one-and-the-sameness [*Einerleiheit*].

"being-at-the-same-time-cause-and-effect *of itself*" as a constitutive, not a merely regulative principle, that is, he thought Kant believed that it gave us knowledge of the entire world, not just a rule from proceeding in our attempts to understand the organic, phenomenal world (SW 1.2: 40, 42; 1.3: 491ff., here: 495).

(3) A third essential impetus for Schelling was Kant's famous thesis about being [*Sein*] (in the sense of existence).

Kant had first presented it in his essay *The Only Possible Argument in Support of a Demonstration of the Existence of God*. The indeterminate verbal expression "being" has a "perfectly simple" meaning: Positing [*Position, Setzung*].[24] "Positing" is as it were the generic term for "being," a name which – Kant says – is conceptually "almost unanalysable."[25] Almost, for a twofold specification can nevertheless be wrested from it: specification into relative and absolute positing. A positing is called relative that posits a classifier in relation to a subject, as is the case in customary predicative sentences. A concept is posited absolutely, in contrast, when something corresponds to it in general, namely, when it does not describe an empty set, as for example, in the (predicateless) sentences: "There *is* a God" or "I *am*." Taken strictly, the meaning of "being" (qua "existence") is thus limited to that of absolute positing. The late Schelling calls statements about existential being "*absolutely predicateless*" or "non-attributive" (GPP, Schelling 1972: 426; SW 11.3: 162) – true to the Kantian statement that existential being is not to be confused with a "real predicate."[26] In Kant, the expressions "real" and "actual/existing" are rigorously separated: they belong to two entirely different groups of categories, to quality and to modality. A predicate is called "real" that makes a contribution to *realitas*, to the "thinghood" [*Sachheit*] of an object.[27] "Being," however, is not a real predicate; it says nothing about the what, but rather only about the that, or – in scholastic terminology – nothing about the *quidditas*, but rather only about the *quoddita*s of its object. Later, Frege and Russell, following Kant, shed light on the meaning of the existential "is."

Yet how are being and predication connected; i.e., what makes them varieties of one positing? The synthesis of judgment (the "relative positing") must be conceived as a lesser form of that which Kant had called "absolute positing." It is precisely this that Hölderlin appears to have had in mind when he wrote down in Spring 1795: "*Being* –, expresses the

[24] Kant AA 02: 73; cf. 70. [25] Kant AA 02: 73. [26] KrV, A598ff.
[27] KrV A143/B182 and A597f./B625f.

combination of subject and object . . . *Judgment* [Urteil] – is . . . that separation which makes object and subject first possible, the judgment [*Ur-theilung*, original – separation]."[28] Novalis seems to hold exactly the same view: existential being is not adequately presented to consciousness if it is expressed in the form of a judgment, or, as we might say in propositional form. Rather such being is really only being-as-mere-appearance, that is, as he phrases it, "no proper being." Novalis then adds: "Improper being is an image of being." To put this in Kantian terms: positing something in a judgment is a merely relative form of positing, although this is the form which positing must take for something to enter consciousness; such relative positing, however, mirrors in propositional form absolute positing.

It will be noticed that Hölderlin and Novalis articulate the primal division [*Ur-teilung*] sometimes in semantic, and sometimes in epistemological terms. Sometimes they speak of "subject" and "predicate" (thus semantically), and sometimes (ontologically) of a "subject" and an "object" – just as Schelling and Hegel did in the same time period. The sources for this confusion have only recently been reconsidered by Michael Franz.[29]

(4) With this I come to a fourth impetus that Schelling and Hegel both experienced during their time in the seminary. It explains why this generation understands the predicative "is" differently from Kant, namely as an indicator of identity. Prima facie it follows Leibniz's thesis that all true judgments consist in analyses of that which is contained in the subject-term (*praedicatum inest subjecto*). However, the view of the Tübingen contingent is specifically shaped by the logician and metaphysician Gottfried Ploucquet's identity conception of predication. Ploucquet died in 1790, before Schelling entered the seminary, but his writings were canonical in the seminary and for a long time were used as a basis for the inaugural theses of students seeking the master's degree.[30] When he was reworking his *Darstellung*, Schelling asked his parents to send him, among other things, Ploucquet's *Expositiones* (AA 11.2: 442, 806f.).

Ploucquet had a strong influence on Schelling in two respects. First, via his conception of the "self-manifestation (*manifestation in se*)" of the absolute in an absolute form; he interpreted the absolute form to be the logical or propositional form[31] and further held that the absolute could be

[28] Hölderlin 1991, vol. 17: 156, line 1, lines 19–22; Hölderlin 2003. [29] See Franz 2005.
[30] Frank 2007, ch. 13 and 14; Frank 2010: 271ff.; Michael Franz's "Introduction" to Ploucquet 2006: xxxff.
[31] Evidence in Franz 2005: 47ff., 55ff.

clearly understood only if expressed in this form.[32] Thus in §§7 and 8 of his *Ontologia* he distinguishes two modes of intelligibility: "*intellegibilitas, quae*" (intelligibility, which . . .) and "*intellegibilitas, quâ*" (intelligibility by which . . .). The first of these refers to what is intelligible; the second to the way in which it becomes intelligible. Both of these aspects are combined in Schelling's doctrine of the "self-manifestation" of essence in the propositional form of a judgment of identity.[33]

Even more influential on Schelling (and probably also on Hegel) was Ploucquet's idea that in every judgment we make (except existential ones), we "compare" two concepts with one another, and in the case of affirmative judgments, we even identify them. From here there is a direct path to Schelling's intuition, to "build-in" (*einbilden*, as he is fond of putting it) the identity formula with an essential moment of difference.

The point of departure for his consideration resembles Ploucquet's in a recognizable way: Schelling understands judging to be a sort of aligning [*Zur-Deckung-Bringen*] of two conceptual extensions [*Begriffsumfänge*], which however may very well differ in their content – their "intension," as we say. "Extension" [*Extension*] or "scope" [*Umfang*] means the host of *objects* that fall *under* a concept. "Intension" [*Intension*] or "conceptual content" [*Begriffsinhalt*] means the totality of conceptual marks that are contained *in* a concept. A concept is extensionally richer the more objects fall under it (so the term "living being" is richer than "human"). Precisely the inverse relation predominates intensionally; for, indeed, the conceptual mark "human" supervenes on the conceptual mark "living being."

According to Ploucquet, in every (predicative) judgment two concepts [*notiones*], namely a subject- and a predicate-concept, are "compared" with one another: "*Judicium* est comparatio notionis cum notione." Such comparisons arise from reflection.[34] A judgment is accordingly affirmative when it is seen that subject and predicate align completely within it. ("Intellectio *identitatis* subjecti & praedicati est *affirmatio*.") In this case, the two expressions can be reversed, i.e., can be read in both directions without loss of their truth-value.[35] The judgment is negative when the subject is seen to be different from the predicate; in such judgments, the

[32] Ploucquet 1782, §153: 161. [33] See above all SW 1.7: 57.

[34] Kant's influence is still noticeable here. See *Prolegomena*, Kant AA 04: 326.

[35] "Conversio propositionis est commutatio subjecti cum praedicato." ("A conversion of a proposition is an interchange of subject and predicate."); Ploucquet 2006: 114, §207: "Cum in definitione subjectum & praedicatum eandem notionem exhibeant; omnis definitio est propositio *convertibilis* seu *reciprocabilis*." (As in a definition subject and predicate represent one and the same notion, every definition is a *convertible* or *interchangeable* proposition.)

terms are not exchangeable.[36] Mere difference in conceptual extensions thus justifies negation.

If one wishes to compare this conception with the Kantian one, predication is precisely a relative identification, just as being [*Sein*] is an absolute one. By bringing together Kant's famous thesis about being and the identity conception of predication, there emerges the conception peculiar to Hölderlin, Novalis, and Schelling, according to which the essence of absolute identity presupposes a ground that rejects all consciousness. Being, in Schelling's late period, is "that prior to which nothing can be thought" [*unvordenklich*]: No thought – no real predicate – can be prefixed to it or put in before it, there is no thought or predicate from which it could be derived or made intelligible (Schelling 1993: 166; SW 11.3: 227f., cf. 262).

(5) We stand here at the threshold of the fifth presupposition that influences Schelling's identity theory of predication. It has received least scrutiny because Schelling has intentionally obscured it from view: it appears in only two student-copies of his unpublished lecture courses and in some *Weltalter* fragments, which remained equally unpublished during his lifetime. There we find Schelling's allusions to the model of Wolff and the "older logic," which uses the figure of "reduplicative" predication, already forgotten in Schelling's time. In the transcript of his 1830 lecture course *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, which Schelling himself revised for his student, the Bavarian crown prince Maximilian, one finds the following passage, which I here pull out of its highly interesting context:

> Through the I in free purity [*Bloßheit*], or a°[,] there is neither a determined *a* nor *b*, because it can still become *b*, but has not yet come to be *b*. It is the I in its indifference, *a* and *b* equated, without it being as *a* or *b*, although it includes within itself [the] possibility of being not only the [I] as *a*, but also the [I] as *b*, as fully equal possibility. If it determines itself, however, and actually takes on being [*Sein*], which consequently, as taken on, is something different than its pure essence, then it is no longer as a°, but rather, because it has become *b*, as *a*. One of the two possibilities lying within it is now fulfilled. Previously both possibilities were equivalent in it; now, however, *a* posited as *a* is duplicated with itself. If this expression is no longer found in recent logic, it is nevertheless common in Wolffian logic, in which the expression "reduplicative positing" means as much as the fact that *a* steps out from the implicit ability to be *b*, and then as *a* consequently is *a* multiplied with itself. A thus cannot be *b* without it at the same time

[36] Ploucquet 1970: 48.

> being as *a*. We would have on the one side a = b, on the other side *a* in the opposition and in the tension whereby the *a* becomes a^2. (Schelling 1989a: 49f.)

This passage throws light on the reasons Schelling has for using the mathematical concept of "raising to a higher potency" as a metaphor. If, then, a (e.g., "human being") and b ("living thing") are two fundamentally indifferent possibilities, that is, if ego has not posited either one of them yet [*in freier Bloßheit*], then neither has any priority over the other. If, then, I posit a under the aspect of B[37] (for instance, "being a living thing"), I can express this in the new notation as Ba: "a human being, insofar as it is a living thing." Schelling would say "a is multiplied by b." The same holds for a posited under its own aspect ("a insofar as it is A": "a human being insofar as it is a human being"). Schelling would claim that Aa = a^2, that is, that a was multiplied by itself.

Schelling's son transmitted a similar passage from a Munich lecture course of his father's, *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie* (SW 1.10: 103). In looking back at the 1830s, Schelling refers here to his own Philosophy of Nature and the relation of the absolute to its predicates thematized therein:

> The A posited as A is however no longer the simple A, but A, which is A, not – is and is not, but rather is decided. A, which is A, is the A duplicated with itself (in the older logic, this type of positing, where A is posited not simply, but *as* A, was called the reduplicative type or *reduplicatio*), thus A posited as A is no longer simple, but duplicated A, which we (after the concept is explained) for the sake of brevity can call A^2 [thus: A to the second potency], and we would thus have on the one side A that has become B [object], on the other in opposition and in tension *with* this – but precisely for this reason at the same time in the increase *through* this – A^2 (the A increased in itself, for that means the A posited as such).

The "older logic" in Schelling's usage[38] designates a tradition that reaches back via Leibniz to scholasticism.[39] Philosophers in this tradition use the

[37] One must recall here that, like all of his contemporaries, Schelling did not distinguish notationally between expressions that referred to objects [the set of all living things] and properties ["being a living thing"].

[38] See Schelling 1946: 28, 127.

[39] See for example Thomas Aquinas in his *Commentaries on the Sentences* (*Scripta super libros sententiarum* [1252–6]: 8415f., 8690). This first magnum opus offers a very loose commentary on the *Libri quattuor sententiarum* by Peter Lombard (1150–2). See also Jean Buridan in his *Organon* commentaries (*Quaestiones in Analytica Priora*. [Liber primus, Quaestio 43a] and *Posteriora* [Liber secundus, Quaestio 21a]; also in the *Tractatus de Consequentiis*, 4.4 "De syllogismis ex propositionibus reduplicativis," 28a.) I thank Christian Ströbele for drawing my attention to these significant passages.

term "*reduplicatio*" to refer to the process of specifying an aspect under which the subject is being considered (such as, "the-surgeon-considered-(purely)-as-a-surgeon," as opposed to "the surgeon-considered-as-a-businessman"). This is also called "*praecisio*" and is distinguished from predication in the proper sense. (Reduplication is also possible for predicates, but this is not relevant in the present context.)

An example would be: "Homo est sensibilis inquantum animal." (A human being is sensible *as* animal.) Typically, but not necessarily, the reduplicative expression [*terminus reduplicativus*], *animal*, is not identical with the authentic predicate, *sensibilis* (if it is identical or if the predicate is implied in the subject, the reduplication is called *inutilis* [useless]. Example: *omniscius* [omniscient] and *spiritus sapientissimus* [wisest of all minds]).[40] Reduplication itself is expressed by conjunctions or adverbs, in each case according to whether a dependent clause or a noun clause follows: *(pro)ut, respectu, quatenus, qua, in quantum, quando, secundum quod, qua ratione* inter alia.[41] The subject-expression bends, as it were, back upon itself and reflects *sub respectu quodam* [under a description] its meaning, which is thereby split ("duplicated") in two. The idea is that one can speak of every subject-term in several respects. Reduplication is supposed to establish the precisely relevant semantic perspective. A standard example: "A human, *insofar as* he is human, is the worthiest of all creatures; *insofar as* he is a heinous evil-doer, however, he is deserving of contempt." Or: "Whoever heals humans *as* sick, is a doctor; whoever heals them *as* sinners, is a clergyman." Or: "*As consul*, Fabius Maximus has authority over his father; but *as son* he stands under his father's authority" (an example from Plutarch's *Life of Fabius Maximus*). "A cylinder is, *with respect to its base*, larger than another, though smaller *with respect to its height*." "Flower B is, *according to its form*, more beautiful than flower A, which, however, has a more beautiful scent."[42] Or: "*As* an amphibian, the crocodile *swims* in water and *runs* on land." Models for this are a famous passage from Aristotle's *Analytica Priora* (1.38) and his metaphysical talk of "beings *as* beings" (or, as it is more commonly translated, the "being of beings" [*Sein des Seienden*]: *to on hê on*).[43] Whoever, for instance, speaks reduplicatively of the good "*as* good" or "*insofar as* it is good," singles out the aspect that is essential for the context and excludes the rest.

[40] Cf. Leibniz 1999: n. 241, 1243. [41] Bäck 1996. [42] Examples from Leibniz 1999: n. 241, 1242f.
[43] Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Bk. IV, 1003a; on this, Angelelli 1978; Honnefelder 1989: 102f.

Obviously the reason *reduplication* was important for medieval theologians was that it allowed one to show that one could think about the dual nature of Christ (Christ-as-God and Christ-as-man) without contradiction. To be sure, a logical examination does not actually allow that (for "mortal" and "immortal" form a contradiction).[44] Yet Schelling, in any case, approaches the problem more carefully, by taking the nature–mind identity (X) as a premise and then having still to make intelligible how these two single predicates/designations of absolute identity can exist with one another as reduplications of X. He thereby explicitly invokes Leibniz (Schelling 1946: 28, 127), who sought a "concordant" solution for several apparently incompatible philosophical commitments. Leibniz, Schelling claims, has demonstrated the falsity of the much cited logical rule: "Contradictory things cannot be asserted either of each other or of any third thing." [*Translator:* that is, the cold cannot be said to be hot nor the hot cold, nor can the water be said to be both hot and cold.]

The attempt to mediate between two theses is called "concordant" to the extent that it reads the one "en un bon sens," thus under a generous interpretation (*reduplicatio*) in which it is no longer incapable of being unified with the other. Similar arguments can be used to support the claim of compatibility between our corporeal and our spiritual nature,[45] between determinism and freedom; and between the hypothesis that our ideas are innate and the claim that they have their origin in sensory receptivity.

The dialogue between Philalethes and Theophile in the *Nouveaux Essais* operates pervasively according to the concordant-reduplicative method, as the beginning of the first book illustrates: philosophers – even the "sectarians" among them – are often right in what they assert, but wrong only in what they deny. Daniel Schulthess[46] has shown exactly how the concordant method, which operates according to this insight, functions: one transforms theses (assertions) into disjunctions of subtheses that are opposed to one another (*disjuncta*), of which one – and consequently the disjunction as a whole – is necessarily true. According to the law that was later named after the logician August De Morgan, but was familiar to scholars in the late Middle Ages,[47] the negation of a disjunctive statement is the conjunction of the negations of its parts: $-(P \vee Q) \leftrightarrow (-P \,\&\, -Q)$. With this, however, *both* horns of the alternative are negated, while in the (affirmed) initial form one horn of the alternative had to be true. The consequence is that one ought never to reject theories flat out: "Raison tu

[44] Vallicella 2004; Bäck 2003. [45] Leibniz 1875–90, IV: 523f.; Leibniz 1986–90, III.1: 4ff.
[46] See Schulthess 2007 and Schulthess 2009. [47] Kneale and Kneale 1962: 295.

as/ en ce qu'affirmes, tort/ en ce que tu nies."[48] Today one would speak of "weak" or "compatibilist" theories, which do not play alternative perspectives off against one another, but integrate them on a more modest or conciliated level.

It seems to me that, if one looks for a parallel in recent philosophy, the thought of the reduplicative view of a subject can be compared most readily to Peter Geach's theory of the relativity of identity. Geach is a towering authority on the Middle Ages, although he does not appeal to the operation with the *reduplicatio*. Geach calls "strict" or "absolute" statements of identity about two things or names or processes senseless, insofar and as long as we do not specify the aspect (represented by a "count noun," "mass," or "general term"), with respect to which we identify it. Strict statements of identity, which simply equate two terms, have the form "$x = y$" or, more precisely, "$Fy \Leftrightarrow \exists x\,(Fx \wedge x = y)$" or "$Fb \wedge b = a \rightarrow Fa$"; "relative" statements of identity – namely, statements of identity that have been relativized with respect to aspect – have in contrast the form: "x is the same A as y; but x is not (necessarily also, e.g.) the same B as y." "x is identical with y" is, consequently, analyzed as an incomplete statement; in relative statements of identity the quantifier is "unrestricted." Such an aspect (one denoted by a general term) provides, says Geach, the *criterion* of identity for the relation between x and y.[49] The criterion of identity lying at the basis of the supposedly strict conception of identity states – upon closer analysis – only the indistinguishability of two objects *in a theory*, yet presents itself as independent of theory ("whatever is valid of x is also valid of y no matter which theory underlies it"). For this reason, the strict conception of identity incurs the problem that what in one theory is a predicate of identity is possibly no longer one in another theory of the same object realm (Grelling's Paradox[50]).

Concerning examples for relative identity: According to *type*, "speaks_1" is the same word as "speaks_2"; they differ, however, as tokens. The Beefeater in front of the Tower of London is the same he was yesterday *as* a functionary, but not *as* an individual person: yesterday it was Mr. Foster, today he is called Mr. Smith. Lord Newriche speaks on Monday and Tuesday with the same herald Bluemantle; but he speaks with two different men, because there was a crew change from Monday to Tuesday.[51] Or, to turn back to the Middle Ages, with an example of Buridan's

[48] Cf. Leibniz's letters to N. Remond from January 10 and August 14, 1714 (Leibniz 1986–90, v.2: 322, 340ff.); Schulthess 2007.
[49] Geach 1968: 63f.; cf. 149ff. [50] Geach 1972. [51] On this Griffin 1977; Henrich 1979: 146–8.

(Commentary on the *Analytica Priora*, Quaestio 43a, 4.; cf. *Tractatus de consequentiis*, 4.4.3 and Ch. 5.8.5 of the logical magnum opus, *Summulae de Dialectica* 5.8.5): Socrates is ridiculous as a human being, not as a philosopher. One can also say that under one description x is F, under another G.[52] In this sense, an early modern philosophical lexicon (from 1613) defines *reduplicatio* as "quaedam conditio posita in propositione reddens rationem, qua praedicatum attribuitur Subjecto, vt[,] Qua, Kata [incorrectly in the text: Kath´hi], Quatenus," that is, as a condition that is posited in a statement (or added to a statement) and provides a reason for attributing the predicate to the subject: *as*, *insofar as*.[53] And precisely in this sense, as "*conditio, sub qua praedicatum convenit subjecto termino*," it is used by Wolff as well;[54] however, despite what Schelling says, I have not found in Wolff's writings on logic the expression that Leibniz commonly uses.[55] Even without this, the similarity between Schelling, on the one hand, and Geach, on the other, is obvious. A sentence occasionally sounds categorical, although an analysis of its deep structure brings to light a hypothesis (a hidden condition) under which the subject-expression de facto stands. If one spells out this (implicit) condition, it reads as follows: "*insofar as* the subject is specified/determined in such and such a way." "If, namely, the predicate corresponds to the subject not simply (*absolute*), but only *under a certain condition*, the condition does not for all that withdraw in such a way that the conditional particle [*als*] would not be posited expressly (*expresse ponatur*). The statement thus remains hypothetical."[56] Wolff illustrates this with the sentence "A stone falling from a great height has a powerful force (*impetum*)." It is formally categorical, but covertly hypothetical, for in a concealed manner it is saying "*insofar* as it falls from a great height."

III The relevance of Schelling's theory of identity for contemporary mind–body theories

Contemporary mind–body theories operate with similar examples. Davidson, for instance, starts from three assumptions: (1) that the mental exists; (2) that causal relations exist between the mental and the physical in

[52] Cf. Anscombe 1981. [53] Goclenius 1980: 965. [54] Wolff 1983: 230ff., §227ff.

[55] Leibniz invokes occasionally Joachim Junge's *Hamburgische Logik* (1638, Jungius 1977; Leibniz's excerpts "Logica de notionibus Jungiarum Schedarum excerpta annotata," in Leibniz 1999: VI, n. 241, 1211–99, here esp. 1241–4 ("quatenus"); on Leibniz's esteem for Jungius: Leibniz 1999: n. 162, 726. On Leibniz's use of reduplication: Nuchelmans 1983: 223f.; Burkhardt 1980: 230f.; Schulthess 2007.

[56] Wolff 1983: §218.

both directions; and (3) that the physical universe is a closed deterministic system (i.e., that only physical events can cause physical changes). These three assumptions, however, are inconsistent, so one must give one of them up. Davidson's proposal, in outlines, focuses on the second assumption. It is true but needs to be interpreted with the following qualification: every mental event must be "realized" in a physical event. The problem then is to describe a way of picking out those physical properties that count as "realizing" mental properties, and distinguishing them from "merely" physical properties. In other words, it must be *by virtue of* its mental character that this determinate physical state counts as the realization of this determinate mental state. The term "*by virtue of*" as used above (which we could render in Latin as "*quâ*," "*inquantum*," or "*quatenus*") indicates that what we have here is a case of what Christian Wolff would have called "reduplication." The reduplicative "*quâ*" is important because particulars (for instance, events) bring about their effects *by virtue of* their properties; their causality is not simple and unconditional. One can illustrate this with an example that is like one Wolff gives: If the pointer on the scales points to "200," the cause is "the apple *quâ* physical body weighing 200 grams," not "the apple *quâ* green." Similarly for any given human action the cause is "this sequence of events *quâ* intended by subject S," not "this sequence of events *quâ* set off by this (physiologically specified) contraction of the muscles."

Clearly, the starkly modal feature in Schelling's figure of *reduplicatio* ("as *being-able*-to-be-a-or-b" and falling-into-contradiction only with the *actualization* of the reduplicating positing) cannot be understood in the context of Wolff's *Logica*. This is true also when one studies the paragraphs of his *Ontologia* devoted to modality.[57] These paragraphs – in characteristically reduplicative discourse – demonstrate why something possible is necessarily possible and why every being, as a result of the principle of sufficient reason, is necessarily existent ("*Quodlibet, dum est, necessario est.*" [Whatsoever, as long as it is, exists necessarily.][58])

IV Schelling's theory of identity and Kant's conception of organism

Let us return to Schelling's first attempt (undertaken during his Identity-Philosophy phase) to understand the identity between nature and mind reduplicatively. Here we will be dealing not with a simple identity, but with an

[57] Wolff 1977: 232ff., §§285ff. [58] Wolff 1977: 233, §288 and 234, §289.

identity "doubled in itself" or with an "identity of identity." The doubling of identity requires, then, a conceptual reworking of the formula of identity, which Schelling – this time having recourse to Kant's determination of the organism as both cause and effect of itself[59] – undertakes as follows: the absolute is that which is *of itself* the affirming and the affirmed (SW 1.6: 148, 162ff.). The formula "of itself" is meant reduplicatively. A precise interpretation of this phrase ("of itself") brings to light that each, the affirming and the affirmed (under reciprocal exponentials or preponderances) is the *entire* absolute.[60] Even this consequence would already be discussed in Kant's emphasis on the systematic constitution of organic structures: the reciprocity of their parts[61] is evident only from their common "dependence" on a whole;[62] information about the whole is, as it were, intracellularly stamped in each part. Yet the whole does not live by grace of nature or freedom, but, as Kant states unequivocally, by their "one-and-the-sameness" [*Einerleiheit*].[63] The latter "raises itself to a higher potency" [*'potenziert' sich*] – as Schelling had learned from Eschenmayer (SW 1.4: 113)[64] – according

[59] KU, Kant AA 05: 370, 373, 376. In the *Timaeus* commentary (1794), Schelling elucidates Plato's talk of the world-whole as a living being through the determination of the organism given in §65 of KU "as a being whose parts are only possible through their relation to the whole, whose parts relate to one another reciprocally as means and purpose" (Schelling 1994: 33). The definition of the organism leaps over, then – taking up Plato's talk of the *zôon noêtikon* – toward the determination of *spirit* as something constituted in a, in this sense, living, i.e., organic way (Schelling 1994: 28ff.). In the *Abhandlungen zur Erläuterung des Idealismus der Wissenschaftslehre* (1796–7) the expression "spirit," which was subsequently to have such a precipitous career as a concept, is for the first time characterized by the core attribute of a living organization (SW 1.1: 366ff.). Thus, Schelling's introduction of the concept "spirit" becomes initially intelligible not as a further development of the Fichtean thought of the I, but as being created from Kant's determination of the organism as a self-regulative principle [*Prinzip*]. Only because our spirit is itself organically constituted can the natural organism become as symbol for spirit: "Therefore every organism is something *symbolic*, and every plant is, so to speak, *the hidden trait of the soul*" (SW 1.1: 386). I have tried to show in more detail in Frank 1991: ch. III, 98ff. that Kant's determination of the organism acted as the force behind Schelling's conception of spirit.

[60] See §18 of the *Würzburger System* (SW 1.6: 161ff.), thus already the *Darstellung* from 1801 (SW 1.4: 121, §16, Corollary 1; 123, §41, Corollary; 139, 143).

[61] Kant says: "the effect of the concurrent moving forces of the parts" (KU, Kant AA 05:373).

[62] KU, Kant AA 05: 373, 407.

[63] Kant speaks in the long footnote to §87 of an "insight . . . into the supersensible substratum of nature and its *one-and-the-sameness* [*Einerleiheit*] with that which makes causality through freedom possible in the world" (KU, Kant AA 05: 449 bottom [italics mine, M.F.]; [Cambridge translation altered to reflect the meaning of "Einerleiheit" as a "strict sameness" – Trans.]). In his correspondence with Fichte, Schelling, on October 3, 1801, refers to the inexistent note to §74 (Schelling 1968: 133). He means the one above.

[64] On this AA III.2.1: 75ff.; cf. Eschenmayer's important letter to Schelling from July 21, 1801, where he criticizes Schelling's application of the doctrine of raising-to-a-higher-potency [*Potenzenlehre*], in particular the use of the mathematical sign of identity (=) between different, potentiated expressions (AA III.2.1: 357ff.; cf. the comment on that in III.2.2: 739ff.).

to perspectives of "quantitative" outweighing or receding of aspects of nature or mind through enduring identity.[65]

V The structure of Schelling's mature Philosophy of Identity

With these presuppositions (the theorem of reduplication and the doctrine of raising-to-a-higher-potency) the path is clear for an identity-theory of judgment that takes account of the difference that exists between things that have been equated in a judgment.

In Schelling's publications from 1806 onwards we find recurring the obscure formula of "being [*Seyn*] itself," which expresses itself in the copula "is," as the "bond of essence as one with itself, as a multiple" (SW 1.7: 55; 1.2: 365, cf. 360f.).

The translation of "copula" as "bond" [*Band*] occurs, as we saw earlier, in reference to the *desmos* of the Platonic *Timaeus* (31c; further references: 36a, 38e, 41b, 43a, 73d, 77e). It also appears in Schelling's discussion of the identity of the many and the one, or of the "mediating third" between the infinite (*apeiron*) and the finite (*peras*) in the *Philebus* (14c ff., 23d ff.). Schelling introduces yet a fourth principle as the cause of this mediation, and considers this fourth principle in his correspondence with Eschenmayer.[66]

The formula of the bond of an essence as one with itself as a multiple proves, first, the influential force of Schelling's early Plato studies – and the mediating influence of Hahn and Oetinger.[67] Second, it proves Schelling's conception, mediated by Ploucquet, of the essence of the copula as a sign of identification. "The predicating and the predicated" are identified by the judicative "is." Schelling adds to that a third thought that is entirely his own: in the case of identifying predication, one can reflect either "on the absolute equality [Ploucquet's 'aequalitas'], the copula itself, or on the subject and the predicate as the [distinguished] equated" (SW 1.2: 361). The first unity is the uninteresting being-equal-unto-itself [*Sich-selbst-Gleichsein*] of the essence "only with itself," not with its other ("a pure, mere one, in this its abstract unity"). With this the fourth thought comes into play (a thought that is again Platonic and mediated by Hahn): the authentic, contentful identity takes place between the essence (that concerning which, or according to Hahn, whereby/by power of which a judgment is made) and its form (the predication articulated into two),

[65] Rang 2000.
[66] Plitt 1869–70, II: 24ff., beginning with Eschenmayer's letter to Schelling from July 24, 1804.
[67] Matthews 2011.

which in a trivial (tautological) sense is not "the same" as the essence ("that that which *is* or exists as one in being [*in dem Seyn*] is necessarily a bond between itself and another" [SW 1.7: 55]). If I call the former the binding, and the latter the bound, then I come to the formula of unity just cited, which itself connects once again "the bound with the bond" (SW 1.2: 61): the "mediating third" of the late Platonic dialogues.[68]

We are then no longer dealing with an opposition between the one and the multiple or between the infinite and the finite

> rather the *same thing* which multiplicity is, that same thing is also unity, and what unity is, the *very same thing* is also multiplicity, and this necessary and indissoluble one of unity and multiplicity which inheres in unity, you may call this its existence. (SW 1.7: 56)

This formula receives the following elucidation in the *Weltalter*:

> We would in general say that the bond in the judgment is never a mere part of it, even if, as is assumed, the best part, but rather its entire essence, and the judgment is actually the unfolded bond itself; the true sense of every judgment, e.g., the most simple, A is B, is actually this: *that which A is is* that which B *is* also, whereby it becomes apparent how the bond lies at the basis of both the subject and the predicate. Here there is no simple unity, but rather a unity doubled with itself or an identity of identity. (Schelling 1946: 28; in more detail 129)

In the Munich *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (1830), Schelling elucidates this accomplishment of differentiation, which separates the one bond into two things bound together, as the accomplishment of the conceptual particle "as" (Schelling 1989a: 44f., 49). A graceful woman loses this highest appeal the moment she observes herself *as* graceful; a king travels *incognito*, but does not cease to be king; he just does not travel *as* king. Thus the absolute *itself* (= X) is not *as A* or *as B*, and the two descriptions/characterizations both express the whole and undivided essence of X without letting themselves be replaced by one another in utterances (A and B thus have different truth conditions): The infinite is not *as such* the finite, just as the free is not *as such* the enchained (SW 1.7: 205, note 1). Correspondingly it is also the case that my falling in love is not as such an excitation of a "falling-in-love-fiber" of my cortex. But it could be that this phenomenon of falling in love according to one description (epistemological) is falling in love, while according to another (neurobiological), it is an electromagnetic cerebral phenomenon. Indeed,

[68] For proof of this formulation cf. the Introduction to the *Ideen zu einer Philosophie der Nature*, already published in 1797 (SW 1.2: 55).

one may go so far as to say that the excitation of brain fibers is the sole (known) physical realizer of the state of consciousness.

We are here dealing with a problem that thoroughly resembles the apparent dilemma that Schelling – following Leibniz and his scholastic predecessors (Schelling 1946: 28, 127) – intended to solve according to the reduplicative method. The proponent says, for instance, that phenomenal states are subjective, because it is necessary for their emergence that the subject somehow feel them. This, however, is not so for neuronal states; they are fully objective. Consequently – so it appears – no psychic state – according to its type – is neuronal.[69] If we deploy *reduplicatio*, the following compatibilist reading results: Types of psychic and types of neuronal states are not in themselves – or not metaphysically – different (not, namely, insofar as they are considered by X). They are only different from a conceptual (or epistemological) perspective. A type of state can be subjective (phenomenal) under one concept and objective under another (neuroscientific). We can then say that *as* phenomenal state it is subjective, and *as* neuronal it is objective. (Naturally, Schelling offers no answer to McGinn's and Block's question about how I can subjectively, "epistemically," represent or make comprehensible to myself this truth, since, indeed, I am only acquainted with the one horn of the alternative: I feel my pain, but perceive *in this respect* no C-fiber-excitation. Mind discourse is subject to truth conditions different than those for matter discourse. McGinn speaks of a principal limit of intelligibility that he calls "cognitive closure": "You cannot see a brain state *as* a conscious state."[70] The idea that conscious and neurophysiological access are two sides of one and the same reality lacks intelligibility: "Rather we're thinking of the fact that on one side of the identity is a representation that somehow involves a full-fledged conscious experience whereas the other side does not."[71])

To put Schelling's thought briefly, mind–nature identity ought not to be understood eliminatively, as if by "identity of nature and mind" I meant "nature, *and not* mind" or "mind only insofar as it – under more precise analysis – collapses into nature." According to his conviction, Fichtean idealism merely makes the inverse mistake. This view has in recent times

[69] See Nagel 1979.
[70] McGinn 1991: 11; for an even more sophisticated account of the same impossibility, see Block 2005: esp. 90f.
[71] Levine 2006: 188.

found support from Donald Davidson.[72] Identity, Davidson emphasized, must be respected as a symmetrical relation: "I see no good reason for calling identity theories 'materialist': if some mental events are physical events, this makes them no more physical than mental. Identity is a symmetrical relation."[73] Schelling's example, invoking Leibniz, lies entirely along the same lines of thought: "Likewise it could not be said literally: the soul is the body, the body soul; but rather, that which is body in one respect is soul in the other" (Schelling 1946: 28). Of these things one may say, doing a certain violence to language, that they "are been" [*gewesen werden*] by X, by the authentic being [*das eigentlich Seiende*] (*ontôs on*), by the "bond in the judgment" (Schelling 1946: 28).[74] The formula "être été' in fact comes from Sartre,[75] yet it has a significant precursor in Schelling's work. I mean the thought of "transitive" being, which therewith raises what is pervaded or is been by it into being [*das von ihm Durchwaltete bzw. Gewesene damit ins Sein hebt*] (SW 11.1: 293; 11.3: 227). A prototype for these thoughts can already be found in 1806 in the *Aphorismen* (SW 1.7: 205, note 1). There the Spinozistic formula "God is all things" is translated (*invita latinitate*) in such a way that things which are been, namely transposed into being, by God stand in the accusative: "Deus est res cunctas."[76]

The structure of absolute identity – understood as judgment – is thus that of the equal possibility of two (sub-)judgments. Whoever says "A = B," does not say that A, *as* A, would likewise be B – that would be completely absurd. He says rather that that which A is is the same as that which B is (SW 1.8: 213[f.]); or also: that for which the subject-term stands is the same as that for which the predicate expression holds true: $Fa \rightarrow (\exists x)\ (x = a \wedge Fx)$, or also: $(x)\ [(Fx \rightarrow (\exists y)\ (Gy \wedge x = y)]$.[77] More simply, the sense of the identity judgment can be formalized strictly in the spirit of what Schelling had in mind as a conjunction of two sub-judgments with the use of the Peano sign: $\iota x(ax) = x(Bx)$ ("That which is A is that which is also B").[78]

[72] I presented a first version of this thought to him in the early 1990s and received his lively approval. He noted down passages from Schelling's *Würzburger System*.

[73] Davidson 1987: 453; on this, see Frank 1991: 115ff.

[74] Frank employs the verb "to be" here in a passive, transitive sense: "to be been by something" – [Trans.].

[75] Sartre 1943: 58 top, 162, *passim*.

[76] On this in detail, see Frank 2002: 234ff.

[77] Hogrebe 1989: 81.

[78] Since Peano, it is customary in logic to use the string of characters "ιx", meaning "the object x, such that" (Quine 1974: 276).

VI The difference between Schelling's and Hegel's theories of identity

With that I am really at the end of my discussion. However, I promised to examine whether Hegel's friendly amendment for protecting the basic insight embodied in Schelling's formula really does contain everything that makes this formula so attractive for recent discussions of the mind–body problem.

I think it does not. We know, especially because of Henrich's research, that Hegel took a different path from that of the friend of his youth. Hegel calls a simple identity that is not duplicated in itself "Sein," whereas Schelling tries to designate it through the constant X. From the early Jena period through to the *Logic* Hegel tries to show that this identity can and must be explained by reference to the relationships in a judgment because only when "being" turns fluid and transforms itself into an instance of "becoming" does it take the form of a judgment and become capable of being true or false.[79] Very crudely one can say: Hegel makes simple identity a moment of the movement of reflection. However, by this very fact, simple identity stops being a possible independent explanation of the connection between nature and mind because identity has become itself a structural moment of mind and so mind is the real explanatory principle here. That is also the reason that Hegel correctly understands his own mature position as a form of "absolute idealism." His idealism is "absolute" because for it in the final analysis nothing apart from mind can legitimately be said to "be." Mind is what Plato called *to ontôs on*.

It is different with Schelling. The X of absolute identity is conceived as a something which binds together nature and mind. Mind is only one moment of that which is bound together by reduplication; it is not the final overarching explanatory principle which encompasses both itself and its other. Schelling later called the position that absolutizes mind "negative philosophy" because it describes the absolute in a way that does not conform to its nature, namely it characterizes the absolute as mind. Negative Philosophy represents absolute identity in a one-sided way from the point of view of (potential) mind; it does not take account of that which encompasses both mind and nature and gives both of them their grounding. For this reason alone Schelling's formula of identity might become attractive for materialist attempts to "turn Hegel's philosophy right side up again" and this aspect of his philosophy is the basis of the

[79] Theunissen 1978: 54ff., 182, 243, 260ff., 419ff.

continuing attractiveness of Schelling for an ontologically neutral (that is neither materialist nor idealist) mind–body theory, that is, exactly the kind of theory that Davidson aspired to develop.

In the present context it would be inappropriate to explain Schelling's opposition to Hegel by citing passages from Schelling's later works, because Schelling's rejection of Hegel's proposal and approach is essentially already fully present in the publications and lectures of 1802–4. There Schelling still treats Hegel as a competitor engaged in the same project, that of trying to give the best interpretation of the formula that expresses the fundamental principle of philosophy: an identity which is enriched by virtue of including within itself its other. For Schelling "being" – the infinitive form of the absolute copula – is never exhausted by the form of judgment in which it does not more than express and repeat itself. The meaning of "being" cannot be illuminated through reference to judgment alone. As Schelling states repeatedly in central passages of his Philosophy of Identity, absolute identity is radically and completely independent of its *relata* and cannot be explained as a "product" of their interaction.[80]

Hegel pursues another line of thought. He takes talk about "being" as the point of origin of a development which attains its goal when reflection has reached it most internally articulated form. He does this through an argumentative trick which one might describe as follows. The immediacy and indeterminateness of "being" is not, as Schelling would have it, something beyond reflection. On the contrary it is very much a kind of self-relation, albeit, as the A-edition of the *Logic* puts it, a "relation *only* to itself." Hegel thinks that it is easy to show that this relation, as it were a "one-place" [*einstellig*] relation, is identical with what Hegel calls "reflection," that is a form of relating one thing to another which incorporates the other into itself. This makes it seem as if an original sense of immediacy was transformed into a higher sense of immediacy, so that the higher sense comes to be seen as the operative one and the foundation of the original kind of immediacy.

Schelling would have objected that his friend failed to recognize the strict sense of identity as relationlessness or one-and-the-sameness

[80] (1) He speaks of the "complete and absolute independence of the *identity* or of the *equality in itself* from the subjective and the objective" as the relata (SW 1.6: 147, 162; likewise already SW 1.4: 117, §6; 120 bottom, Corollary 1 to §15; 123, §24). And (2) he emphasizes that the absolute cannot be thought as "a product of synthesizing thinking" and just as little can it be thought as something "that is posited in hindsight through annihilation of the opposition"; otherwise it would be "a mere thing of thought [*Gedankending*]" (SW 1.6: 163f.). Hegel appears to head for precisely this consequence. Schelling calls it the "subjectivizing" of the absolute (SW 1.6: 142).

[*Einerleiheit*] in that his interpretation of the formula of identity could not really accommodate strict identity. All that Hegel does is to assimilate reflection as one-place relation [*Einstelligkeit*] to reflection as a two-place relation [*Zweistelligkeit*]; a state of being that is beyond reflection can never be transformed into a form of reflection.

What argument can Schelling give for his position, if we do not allow him to appeal proleptically to the existential–ontological theses which one finds in his later philosophy? In the *Fernere Darstellungen* and the *Würzburg System*, there is an indirect argument, namely a *reductio ad absurdum* of Hegel's alternative proposal: If reflection is construed as being autarchic, it has no need of any input from existence. Then, however, it would also be true that each *relatum* has its "being" in referring to its other. In this game, in which there would be no existence, the *relata* could deny each other an independent existence, but no *relatum* could provide a ground for any other: That which had no independent being has "being" at best in another, not in itself, and it seeks a ground for itself in that other. In that way an unending "circle" of attempted "grounding" would ensue, which could do no more than merely postulate "being." Schelling's later objection against Hegel, namely that Hegel's *System of Logic*, founded as it is on pure logic, suffers from an "infinite lack of being" (in the sense of existence), can be found *in nuce* in the early Identity Philosophy.[81]

[81] SW II.2: 29–32; and Schelling 1972, 439; cf. SW II.1: 294 and SW I.7: 466f.; cf. Frank 1975.

CHAPTER 7

Idealism and freedom in Schelling's Freiheitsschrift

Michelle Kosch

The 1809 essay *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom and Related Matters* marked a turning point in Schelling's thinking about freedom. In various early works he had endorsed a compatibilist account of free will, arguing that acts could be free in the sense required for morally responsible agency, while still being necessary from a causal and even a metaphysical point of view.[1] In later work he would endorse an incompatibilist conception of freedom as involving radical choice between good and evil and entailing contingency in nature.[2] The *Freiheitsschrift* is a point of transition, in which Schelling has introduced the idea that freedom must involve a radical choice between good and evil, but has not yet concluded that such a requirement is inconsistent with the compatibilism of his early system.

He positions the essay's account of freedom as a supplement to an "idealist" account already on hand, writing that idealism has provided the "first complete concept of formal freedom" (SW 1.7: 351),[3] but that this is "only the most general concept of freedom and . . . a merely formal one" and that it lacks an account of the "real and vital concept" of freedom, which is "the capacity for good and evil" (SW 1.7: 352). While not quite true to Schelling's eventual conclusion, this characterization – the comparison with Kant and Fichte that it invites, and the distinction that it assumes between formal and non-formal concepts of freedom – does give the reader a point of entry into the essay.

[1] A good example is the account in the *System of Transcendental Idealism* of 1800, in which the actions of empirical individuals, however arbitrary they seem to those individuals, are in fact determined by natural laws. Cf. SW 1.3: 567–602. Actions are free just in case they follow from the rational nature of the agent performing them, and since natural necessity is itself the product of absolute subjectivity, it is not in conflict with individual freedom.

[2] Cf. e.g., GPP, Schelling 1972: 99–100, 225; SW 11.4: 332; *Philosophie der Offenbarung* (Paulus Nachschrift), Schelling 1977: 14–16 *et passim*.

[3] Translations of Schelling are my own.

To understand the view advanced there, it is in fact helpful to distinguish between two components – call them "formal" and "substantive" – of an account of freedom. The formal component is the account of what is required for morally responsible agency. It will include some psychological characterization of free action that will allow for a distinction between imputable and non-imputable behavior, and will typically also take some stand on the issue of the compatibility of free will and determinism.[4]

What I am calling the "formal" component of an account of freedom is the only topic at issue in the contemporary literature on free will. But for Kant and his followers, a conception of freedom was not exhausted by its formal component. For them, freedom is both the capacity required for morally responsible agency and the source of substantive moral imperatives. So Kant distinguished what he called negative freedom (independence of determination by alien causes) from what he called positive freedom or autonomy (action in accordance with a self-imposed law).[5] And Fichte made a similar distinction, using the terms I have introduced: formal freedom is spontaneous self-determination on the basis of concepts of ends in general;[6] substantive freedom is taking as one's end the real independence of rational agency from non-rational nature.[7]

In writing that idealism has provided the first complete concept of formal freedom, but that this concept is *merely* formal and that idealism lacks an account of the capacity for good and evil, Schelling signals that he means to employ aspects of the accounts of formal freedom provided by Kant and Fichte – and that he means to reject their accounts of substantive freedom. What he has not yet seen at the time of the essay is the degree to which this rejection of the substantive component of their accounts will undermine the philosophical motivation for his own early compatibilism, and that his alternative substantive account will be inconsistent with the very account of formal freedom he endorses here.

[4] In a compatibilist picture, the formal component will allow for a distinction between imputable and non-imputable behavior (in terms of identification or reasons-responsiveness, for example) that does not appeal to indeterminism. In an incompatibilist libertarian picture, the formal component is where, e.g., an account of agent-causation, or indeterministic event-causation, will enter.

[5] *Groundwork*, Kant AA 04: 442, 446–7; KpV, 05: 29ff.

[6] Fichte SW1 04: 35–8, 112, 137, 161–2, 178–80. Compare Kant, KrV, A534/B562, A802/B830.

[7] Fichte SW1 04: 60, 143, 149, 153, 209, 211–12, 231, 350.

I Formal freedom

At the most general level of description – formal freedom as spontaneous self-determination on the basis of concepts of ends – the account that Schelling attributes to "idealism" in the essay is in fact common to Kant and Fichte. In its details, however, neither would recognize his own view. Nor would a reader of the early Schelling recognize it. The account takes something from both Kant and Fichte, and something from Schelling's early metaphysics, but is as a whole novel with the essay.

Schelling follows Kant in emphasizing that spontaneous self-determination is attributable not to the self viewed as an empirical item, object of experience and natural scientific explanation, but instead only to an intelligible ground of the empirical self:

> Idealism actually first raised the doctrine of freedom to that very region where it is alone comprehensible. According to idealism, the intelligible being of every thing and especially of man is outside all causal connectedness as it is outside or above all time. Hence, it can never be determined by any sort of prior thing since, rather, it itself precedes all else that is or becomes within it, not so much temporally as conceptually, as an absolute unity that must always already exist fully and complete so that particular action or determination may be possible in it. (SW 1.7: 383–4)[8]

Schelling's language in this section echoes Kant's very closely, especially the language of *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*. He speaks of a "propensity" to evil – Kant's terminology.[9] He endorses Kant's claim that a good or an evil moral character is something that can be detected in a person from childhood on, and that this does not mean that a person is not the author of his character, only that he has not authored it in time (SW 1.7: 386–7).[10] He also echoes Kant in claiming that this explains why an individual can both feel a certain inevitability in his actions and feel responsibility for being the way he is (SW 1.7: 386–7). In fact Schelling accepts an apparent consequence of the view that Kant himself had denied – that it eliminates the possibility of moral reform – by himself denying the possibility of genuine conversion from evil to good or vice versa (SW 1.7: 389).

[8] Another formulation of the same idea occurs a few pages later: "Man is in the initial creation, as shown, an undecided being . . . only man himself can decide. But this decision cannot occur within time; it occurs outside of time and, hence, together with the first creation . . . The act whereby his life is determined in time does not itself belong to time, but rather to eternity: it also does not precede life but goes through time (unhampered by it) as an act which is eternal by nature" (SW 1.7: 385–6).

[9] Cf. *Religion*, Kant AA 06: 43.

[10] Cf. e.g., *Religion*, Kant AA 06: 25.

Schelling's reason for insisting that spontaneous self-determination is transcendental rather than empirical differs, however, from the one offered by Kant. Schelling's claim seems to rest on a distaste for empirical indeterminism as a matter of moral psychology, rather than a properly Kantian commitment to empirical determinism as fundamental for epistemology. That distaste is discernible in this passage, for instance:

> For the common concept of freedom, according to which freedom is posited as a wholly undetermined capacity to will one or the other of two contradictory opposites, without determining reasons but simply because it is willed, has in fact the original undecidedness of human being as idea in its favor; however, when applied to individual actions it leads to the greatest inconsistencies. To be able to decide for A or ~A without any compelling reasons would be, to tell the truth, only a prerogative to act entirely irrationally . . . (SW 1.7: 382)

> [C]ontingency is impossible; it contests reason as well as the necessary unity of the whole; and, if freedom is to be saved by nothing other than the complete contingency of actions, then it is not to be saved at all. (SW 1.7: 383)

But Schelling's reliance in the essay on this well-worn argument against indeterminism requires him to depart from the Kantian story about intelligible character (offered in the *Critique of Practical Reason* and *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*), on which empirical character is determined by an atemporal, intelligible, but nevertheless individual and *contingent* act of choice. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant seems to accept the well-worn argument, so far as empirical actions go,[11] but he does not extend it to the intelligible act that is the choice of character. Instead, he reasons in *Religion* that if character is not chosen, not the act precisely of an undetermined capacity to will either good or evil, then it is not imputable – and if it is not imputable, then neither are the empirical actions that flow from it.[12] Such a choice is "inscrutable," but must be posited nevertheless if there is to be moral responsibility. Schelling, by contrast, extends the point about the unhelpfulness of undetermined choice for moral imputation to the intelligible determination of character as well:

> There is . . . no transition from the absolutely undetermined to the determined. That, for instance, the intelligible being should determine itself out

[11] For example, at KpV, Kant AA 05: 95. [12] *Religion*, Kant AA 06: 44.

> of pure, utter indeterminacy without any reason leads back to the system of the equilibrium of free will discussed above. (SW 1.7: 384)

Determinism does not threaten at the intelligible level, since intelligible agency is outside of time and natural causation-relations (SW 1.7: 383). But that does not open the door to indeterminism, at least Schelling claims. What role, one might then wonder, does the appeal to intelligible determination of empirical character play?

In reasoning in this way, Schelling departs from Kant and follows a line of argument that can be found in Fichte's *System of Ethics*. Fichte argues that what defines the freedom a free agent has is not that its activity is not determined by anything; nor that its activity is determined (at least in part) by its own nature rather than (entirely) by extrinsic forces (he contrasts the will with the action of a steel spring, whose reaction to pressure is determined by its own nature); but instead that its activity is determined by a nature that is, unlike the spring's, of its own making.[13] What is it for the self's nature to be of its own making? In explicating this idea, Fichte does not appeal to an inscrutable, radical choice of character, as Kant had, but claims instead that it suffices if that nature has its source in concepts rather than in some other being.[14] Other natures have a natural-causal explanation; the nature of the free agent has its ground in conceptual activity. Spontaneous self-determination is self-determination on the basis of a concept of an end that is the product of thought.

For Fichte, then, it is an agent's concept of itself that determines the individual essence that, in turn, determines individual actions. No indeterminism is required for there to be such spontaneity. So while maintaining the Kantian language suggesting a distinct atemporal realm of beings determining the phenomenal realm, Schelling takes up this Fichtean revision of the Kantian picture. That, at least, is what he seems to have in mind in this passage:

> In order to be able to determine itself, [the free will] would already have to be determined in itself, admittedly not from outside, which contradicts its nature, also not from inside through some sort of merely contingent or empirical necessity since all this (the psychological as well as the physical) is subordinate to it; but rather it would have to be determined by itself as its essence, that is, as its own nature. This is of course not an undetermined generality, but rather determines the intelligible being of this individual; . . . But what then is this inner necessity of the being itself? . . . Were this being a dead sort of being and a merely given one with respect to man, then,

[13] Fichte SW1 04: 33–4. [14] Fichte SW1 04: 35–6.

> because all action resulting from it could do so only with necessity, responsibility and all freedom would be abolished. But precisely this inner necessity is itself freedom; the essence of man is fundamentally *his own act*; . . . The I, says Fichte, is its own act; consciousness is self-positing . . . (SW 1.7: 384–5)

Schelling's idea here can perhaps be got at by distinguishing two classical libertarian criteria for free will: causal ultimacy and alternate possibilities. The self on this view has causal ultimacy in virtue of being self-positing (something whose nature cannot be understood except in terms of its own activity – thinking – and owes nothing to anything beyond itself). But it need not have alternate possibilities, need not be capable of choosing a nature different from the one it in fact has. On this view of the self as radically self-constituting, the intelligible agent does not choose among different options, since that would require preexisting its own activity of self-constitution, and that is incoherent. But if one cannot make sense of the agent viewed intelligibly standing (conceptually speaking) before its options and choosing one or the other of them, then one need not imagine such an agent standing before the options with nothing to determine its choice one way or the other. In shedding the alternate possibilities requirement, then, one sheds the apparent need to appeal to the repugnant indifference conception at the intelligible level.

That, at least, is one way of reading the conjunction of the appeal to Fichte in the above passage and the denial that there can be indeterminacy in the choice of intelligible character. Unfortunately it stands in tension with several of Schelling's statements elsewhere in the essay, where he emphasizes the original "undecidedness" of human essence (e.g., at SW 1.7: 385–6) and describes the intelligible choice of character in terms strongly evocative of the freedom of indifference, e.g.: "Man is placed on a summit where he has in himself the source of self-movement toward good and evil in equal portions . . . Man stands on the threshold; whatever he chooses, it will be his act: but he cannot remain undecided . . ." (SW 1.7: 374). These passages are difficult to reconcile with the denial of indeterminism.[15] And indeed in later works Schelling unequivocally endorses a conception of freedom as involving contingent choice (even, apparently, at the empirical level). I will return to this issue below.

[15] Fichte's view contains a similar equivocation in that he elsewhere in the *Sittenlehre* endorses a Reinholdian conception of freedom as arbitrary choice.

One striking claim in the essay is that formal freedom in the "idealist" sense is attributable to all of nature. The essence of each natural item is determined not in time via causal interactions with other things, but instead by its place in an atemporal conceptual order. This is a departure from both Kant and Fichte and is intended by Schelling as a nod to his own philosophy of nature. He writes:

> It will always remain odd . . . that Kant, after having first distinguished things-in-themselves from appearances only negatively through their independence of time and later treating independence of time and freedom as correlate concepts in the metaphysical discussions of his *Critique of Practical Reason*, did not go further toward the thought of transferring this only possible positive concept of the in-itself also to things. (SW 1.7: 351–2)

Likewise, Schelling writes, Fichte was right to say that the I is its own act, that consciousness is self-positing, but should have extended this account to all of being, which "is real self-positing, . . . is a primal and fundamental willing, which makes itself into something and is the ground of all ways of being" (SW 1.7: 385).

The extension of formal freedom, so construed, to all of nature was Schelling's own innovation. Part of his motivation for it had been to dissolve the free will problem in its classical early modern form. He thought that if we could see the necessity in nature not as the work of a mindless mechanistic determinism but instead as the self-realization of a fundamentally rational absolute, there should be no problem with seeing human actions as both free and necessary. So the extension to all of nature of what he here calls the "idealist" conception of formal freedom was essential to his early compatibilism.

This makes the complaint that Schelling here raises all the more puzzling. The problem with the "idealist" conception, Schelling claims, is that the extension of the formal component of freedom to all of nature leaves unspecified what is distinctive about human freedom in particular, thereby failing to provide the "real and vital" concept of freedom as freedom for good and evil. This seems unfair, since Kant and Fichte were not at all guilty of attributing formal freedom to all of nature. Nor is the accusation that idealism's account of freedom is "merely formal" at all plausible when directed against them, for both did offer accounts of substantive freedom. We should instead take Schelling's complaint to be that the substantive account that they did offer could not account for freedom as involving a choice between good and evil.

II Substantive freedom

Kant and Fichte shared a conception of substantive freedom as the autonomy of the rational will. The distinction between Kant's account and Fichte's is that the former understood substantive self-determination in terms of a *law* that rational agency gives itself, whereas the latter understood it in terms of an *end* that rational agency sets for itself. But the rational will was, for both, not only the source of its actual intentions and actions, but also the source of the moral norms against which those intentions and actions are to be measured – norms which are not arbitrarily chosen but objectively valid, valid for all rational beings. The account of autonomy was supposed both to account for the content of moral requirements (to form the foundation for normative ethics) and to account for the categorical bindingness of morality (for the interest the will takes in moral demands). In providing the former, it should provide an account of the *content* of good and evil; and in providing the latter, it should provide an account of how good and evil are possible *objects of choice*.

There are variations, both in the primary texts and in the interpretive literature, of the story about how negative or formal freedom gives rise to a law or end constitutive of it and why that law or end gives rise to binding moral obligations.[16] But the problem that occupies Schelling in the *Freiheitsschrift* persists on any interpretation of the details of the account: how, on such a picture, is a fully formally free choice of moral evil possible? If the moral law (for Kant) or end (for Fichte) is partially constitutive of moral agency, the free will is less than fully free when it thwarts that law or ignores that end. Moral evil is possible only as a failure of the will to be fully free.[17]

[16] A number of quite distinct interpretations of this thought in Kant have been proposed, ranging from constructivist readings, on which rational beings create the laws that govern their activity by engaging in that very activity (Rawls, Korsgaard, O'Neill), to realist readings, on which rational beings apprehend laws of reason that exist independently of their activity (Ameriks, Wood), to combined readings on which the authority of such laws is explained by the assent of the rational being to be bound by it, but their content is explained by considerations independent of the fact that the agent has consented to be bound by it (Reath). All of these have some basis in the text. Fichte's account is also multiply ambiguous – Neuhouser 1990 distinguishes between an "individualist" and a "universalist" construal, on the first of which finding out what one is supposed to do is a matter of finding and acting on the norms that are most truly expressive of oneself as an individual agent, and on the second of which it is a matter of finding out the universal end of subjectivity per se, which will then be one's moral end as an individual.

[17] I have argued this point at greater length in the case of Kant in Kosch 2006a, and in the case of Fichte in Kosch 2006b.

Although theodicy might seem to have pride of place in the *Freiheitsschrift*, it is in fact this problem of evil – the moral psychological one – that is Schelling's main concern. It is what he is referring to when, for instance, he writes that contemporary philosophy "pushes its philanthropism to the brink of denying evil" (SW 1.7: 371):

> According to these notions, the sole ground of evil lies in sensuality or animality, or in the earthly principle, as they do not oppose heaven with hell, as is fitting, but with the earth. This notion is a natural consequence of the doctrine according to which freedom consists in the mere rule of the intelligent principle over sensual desires and tendencies, and the good comes from pure reason; accordingly, it is understandable that there is no freedom for evil (in so far as sensual tendencies predominate) – to speak more correctly, however, evil is completely abolished. For the weakness or ineffectualness of the principle of understanding can indeed be a ground for the lack of good and virtuous actions, yet it cannot be a ground of positively evil ones and those against virtue. (SW 1.7: 371)

Schelling objects to this excessive "philanthropism" by pointing out that it is false to moral experience, since it makes evil incomprehensible from a practical perspective: no one who embraces this sort of view can see him or herself as capable of evil. This is what he means, I take it, when he writes that evil can have no "subjective meaning" on such a view:

> But on the supposition that sensuality or a passive attitude to external impressions may bring forth evil actions with a sort of necessity, then man himself would surely only be passive in these actions; that is, evil viewed in relation to his own actions, thus subjectively, would have no meaning; and since that which follows from a determination of nature also cannot be objectively evil, evil would have no meaning at all. (SW 1.7: 371–2)

Schelling links this "philanthropism" to the autonomism of Kantian and Fichtean moral theory, which makes comprehensible only one determination of the will – will to the good: "there is hence only one will . . . not a dual one . . ." (SW 1.7: 372).

Schelling goes on to argue that there are only two ways in which one might try to explain evil given these assumptions, neither of which is acceptable. The first, that the sensuous inclinations simply overcome the intellectual principle, leads to the result that evil is pure passivity. This is something like the path taken by Fichte, for whom moral evil is the result of laziness, the human manifestation of a general natural principle of inertia.[18] Laziness leads to immorality not by directly inclining us to avoid

[18] Fichte SW1 04: 199.

doing our duty in those cases in which we have clearly grasped what it is – in fact, Fichte thought we cannot be fully conscious of our duty and fail to will it – but rather by inclining us to stop prematurely the process of practical reflection that allows us to correctly determine what our duty is. Fichte calls laziness "the radical evil in human nature,"[19] and it is indeed an optimistic view of human nature on which this is as close as we get to radical evil. Schelling is pointing to this aspect of Fichte's view when he remarks that Fichte "fell prey . . . to the philanthropism prevalent in his moral theory and wanted to find this evil that precedes all empirical action in the lethargy of human nature" (SW 1.7: 389).

The second way of accounting for evil that Schelling suggests, that the intellectual principle permits the sensuous impulses to take precedence, has the result that evil is unintelligible, "For why does the rational principle then not exercise its power?" (SW 1.7: 372). This is of course the conclusion Kant reached in his effort to deal with the problem of evil in *Religion*. Kant was convinced that in order for the empirical actions that flow from it to be imputable, the intelligible choice of fundamental disposition must be a contingent choice.[20] But he was also convinced that it is impossible to conceive of a lawless cause. This second commitment had been the basis of the argument from negative to positive freedom in the *Groundwork*[21] – the basis of the link between formal and substantive freedom – and he reiterated it in *Religion*.[22] The apparent conflict caused Kant to concede, in *Religion*, that moral evil is incomprehensible.[23]

The problem of the "real and vital" component of the account of freedom, then, is that of how a positive conception of moral evil is possible.

[19] Fichte SW1 04: 202.

[20] See e.g., *Religion*, Kant AA 06: 32, where Kant writes that evil maxims must be viewed as "accidental," and *Religion*, Kant AA 06:40, where he equates "freedom" and "contingency" of the moral disposition.

[21] At *Groundwork*, Kant AA 04: 446–7.

[22] See e.g., *Religion*, Kant AA 06: 35: "To think of oneself as a freely acting being, yet as exempted from the one law commensurate to such a being (the moral law), would amount to the thought of a cause operating without any law at all (for the determination according to natural law is abolished on account of freedom): and this is a contradiction."

[23] See e.g., *Religion*, Kant AA 06: 43: "the original predisposition (which none other than the human being himself could have corrupted, if this corruption is to be imputed to him) is a predisposition to good; there is no conceivable ground for us, therefore, from which moral evil could first have come in us." See also *Religion*, Kant AA 06: 43: "The rational origin . . . of this disharmony in our power of choice with respect to the way it incorporates lower incentives in its maxims and makes them supreme, i.e., this propensity to evil, remains inexplicable to us . . ."

What, then, is Schelling's alternative account of the content of good and evil and of how they are possible determinations of the human will?

III Schelling's alternative

If the source of the problem with moral evil that concerns Schelling lies in accounts of morality as substantive freedom, accounts on which one's own constitution as an agent provides an answer to the question of what one ought to do and why one ought to do it, then it is clear from the outset that Schelling's own account must be one on which both morality and immorality are manifestations of substantive freedom – on which both can be seen to follow on full exercises of freedom in the formal sense. So it seems Schelling must be committed to providing, on the one hand, a new account of the causality of finite agents' wills coupled with a new account of moral (and immoral) motivation, and, on the other hand, a new moral metaphysics and epistemology. In fact, only the first pair of issues is addressed in the essay, as he is not yet (in 1809) prepared to address the second pair.

He begins by offering an account of the constitution of things (including persons) as products of the operation of two fundamental principles portrayed in terms of various oppositions in the course of the essay (e.g., gravity/light, chaos/order, non-understanding/understanding, creaturely self-will/universal will). He generally refers to the first principle as the "ground." The second has no fixed appellation – he calls it light, understanding, the universal will, and sometimes God (although this last is problematic: elsewhere in the essay Schelling claims that God, like finite personalities, is instead a synthesis of the two principles). Each principle is an instantiation of will, now the basic ontological category (the "positive content of the in-itself"), but the wills of the two principles are distinguished both according to content and according to character. In terms of content, the will of the ground is a sort of egoism, while the will of the understanding is a sort of universalism, willing the subordination of egoistic self-will within a larger order (SW 1.7: 381). The will of the ground is unconscious or semi-conscious, "blind craving and desire" (SW 1.7: 372), while that of the second principle is fully conscious.

Personality, like other natural products, is the synthesis of these two principles in some concrete unity. Consciousness is always characterized by some form of understanding (the universal principle), while individuality requires separateness (the principle of the ground). Two sorts of synthesis are possible, one in which the will of the ground is subordinated to the will

of the understanding, and one in which the understanding is subordinated to the ground. (These will be good and evil, respectively.)

As conscious, human willing always has in view the totality of the cosmos and its place there. But sometimes it wills to place itself (its particular needs or desires) at the center of things, to elevate the ground (its being-as-distinct) to the status of an end in itself, subordinating the universal to the status of a means.

> [T]hat precisely this elevation of self-will is evil is clarified by the following. The will that steps out from its being beyond nature, in order as general will to make itself at once particular and creaturely, strives to reverse the [proper] relation of the principles, to elevate the ground . . . (SW 1.7: 365)

The good will on this picture is recognizably moral in that it wills to maintain its own place in a larger order, the evil will recognizably immoral in that it treats itself differently from, privileges itself over, other similarly placed finite wills. This is the possibility that Schelling aims to leave room for in his conception of freedom:

> The general possibility of evil consists . . . in the fact that man, instead of making his selfhood into the basis, the instrument, can strive to elevate it into the ruling and total will and, conversely, to make the spiritual within himself into a means. (SW 1.7: 389)

Schelling's criticism of the Kantian/Fichtean account had been that on it, the will does not exercise its power in evil. He believes he has here pointed to an account on which the will does exercise its power in evil, by organizing itself around that principle within it that makes its existence as an individual will possible. This link of the possibility of independent personality with the principle of the ground leads to an interpretation of evil as defiance of or rebellion against the individual's place in a larger cosmic order.

What is the cosmic order at issue, and what would respecting one's place in it amount to? Schelling does not answer this question in the essay, and this absence of a substantive normative ethics in *Freiheitsschrift* is a direct result of the meta-ethics Schelling there advances. Its most characteristic claim is that in order to be free for good and evil, human beings must find the source of the norms to which they are subject outside themselves. The center, the moral absolute, is not immanent to the will of the creature. Agents cannot look to their reason or to some other aspect of their intrinsic nature as a source of norms; nor do they create norms themselves through their own activity, rational or otherwise. The deed that is the basis of the

fundamental moral disposition of an individual is one of orienting itself toward or away from some source of norms that is outside of it.

That alone does not suffice to explain the absence of even a gesture at a normative ethics in the *Freiheitsschrift*. But it does suffice when coupled with the fact that the model of moral philosophical knowledge that Schelling began with – the Kantian and post-Kantian one, now of course unusable – has not yet been replaced with a philosophical account of the sort of broadly empirical inquiry that would be required in this religious form of moral realism. A defense of that sort of inquiry is what he goes on to produce in his later works, under the title "positive philosophy," where he advances a form of theological voluntarism coupled with an empirical inquiry into the history of religious consciousness.[24] Schelling does not yet have that account in 1809, and so it cannot figure in the essay. Instead, all that he offers is an account on which the nature of the divine will (and not the nature of the free will in general) is what makes the good good, and he takes that to be all he needs for his purposes there. Most of the new work done in the essay is aimed at drawing the required distinction between the divine will and a non-divine free will.

That is why it looks as though the main concern of the essay is with theodicy, with accounting for how evil can somehow not be "in" God when everything is in God. Schelling does believe he has a solution to that other problem of evil as well, and the solution takes the general form of a free-will defense. It is novel in that, unlike the traditional free-will defense, it does not rest simply on the non-determination of the human will. Instead it rests in part on the substantive conception of human freedom advanced in the essay: Anything existing must incorporate the principle of the ground. Only an omnipotent being could fully subordinate the ground to the understanding. If there are to be free creatures, they must be such that the will of the ground is active in them. This is a condition of their being independent of God (of their being free creatures to begin with). But being an independent particular is itself a temptation, a temptation to put oneself at the center – elevating the particular over the universal – in one's conscious willing.

As a contribution to theodicy the picture here seems no better than the free-will defense in its traditional form. For someone tempted to ask why

[24] This argument is made in the *Grundlegung der positiven Philosophie* and in the lectures on mythology and revelation (SW II.1–4). For his defense of theological voluntarism in ethics, see e.g., SW I.8: 168; SW I.10: 58; GPP, Schelling 1972: 241, 286, 298. For statements of his epistemology of religion, see e.g., GPP, Schelling 1972: 115, 240–75 *passim*, SW II.3: 113, 131–3, 249 *et passim*.

God would not have done better by creating a nature without any finite spirits in it, given how those spirits would need to be, there are no convincing answers here. Schelling himself often seems to have this misgiving. A reply one could retrieve from his earlier work – from the writings on philosophy of nature and the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, for instance – is that the system of nature would be incomplete without finite spirits. In the *Freiheitsschrift* Schelling claims instead that God would not be *known* (or "revealed") without them. Perhaps that is an interesting addition to the traditional free-will defense.

But despite the fact that theodicy occupies so many pages, it is clear that Schelling's chief concern in the essay is the moral psychological problem of evil and the need to develop a conception of human freedom that avoids it. And while it is clear that he has succeeded in gesturing toward a substantive component of an account of human freedom that is distinct, and distinct in the right way, from the account characteristic of Kant and Fichte, there is a problem with that account which Schelling does not acknowledge in the essay. The problem is that it is not, in the end, consistent with the formal component he had started with.

Schelling's modification does not entail any law-breaking capacities of empirical individuals or the complete lawlessness of nature as it is experienced. Still, if intelligible character is expressed in empirical action, the choice to elevate the ground must result in limitations of the efficacy of the intelligible principle in the empirical world. There would be no need for theodicy were that not the case. And in fact we do find Schelling explaining, in the context of a discussion of the cosmological place of evil, that we can see the effects of evil not only in human conduct, but also in a certain accidentalness in the determination of nature. "There are accidental determinations in nature which are only explicable by appeal to an excitement of the irrational or dark principle of the creature – activated selfhood – in the first creation." (SW 1.7: 376) This accidentalness is not evil per se, but instead its natural result. The irrational and accidental are "bound" to the necessary in the sense of being *mixed* with the necessary in the world as it is experienced.

> The irrational and the accidental, which shows itself to be bound to the necessary in the formation of beings, especially organic ones, proves that it is not a mere geometrical necessity that was at work here, but instead that freedom, spirit and self-will were in play. (SW 1.7: 376)

> [N]owhere does it appear as though order and form are original, instead it seems as if something originally ruleless had been brought to order. This is

> the ungraspable basis of reality in things, the indivisible remainder, that which cannot be analyzed by the understanding even with the greatest exertion . . . (SW 1.7: 359–60)

The idea that the exercise of human freedom is actually responsible for the introduction of chaos into the order of things, prefigured in *Philosophy and Religion* (1804), is a staple of Schelling's late philosophy. But this view becomes dominant only with the *Ages of the World* drafts, and coexists in the *Freiheitsschrift* alongside remnants of Schelling's earlier view. Also characteristic of the later Schelling is the view that full freedom requires indeterminism, and indeed indifference.[25] So the view of freedom in Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* is a transitional one in which he posits a radical freedom for good and evil alongside remnants of the compatibilism of his own early works.

[25] Schelling's embrace of this conception occurs in the context of a discussion of divine freedom, but far from limiting the point to the divine case he presents it as a general truth. See e.g., GPP, Schelling 1972: 212, where he claims that full freedom is present only "when it is *wholly indifferent* to me which of two opposites I do or do not do." Compare GPP, Schelling 1972: 214: "But we attribute perfect freedom only to that cause for which the action is *wholly indifferent* relative to itself." See Kosch 2006a, ch. 4, for a fuller discussion.

CHAPTER 8

Beauty reconsidered: freedom and virtue in Schelling's aesthetics

Jennifer Dobe

Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* (1809) signals a new philosophical orientation that yields his most significant philosophical contribution and legacy.[1] And yet this text also marks the point at which Schelling is understood to have lost interest in aesthetics, transferring its revelatory function to religion or mythology in his late, or "positive," philosophy.[2] It would be a loss if this were the case, since the position articulated in the *Freiheitsschrift* provides a number of resources for rescuing Schelling's aesthetics from the static and lifeless system to which it is confined in his earlier Identity Philosophy. Indeed, I shall argue that Schelling did not let this opportunity go to waste. As early as 1807, in his speech to the Akademie der Wissenschaften in Munich (*Über das Verhältnis der bildenden Künste zu der Natur*),[3] Schelling begins to augment his aesthetics on the basis of a new conception of freedom that ultimately becomes clarified in the *Freiheitsschrift*. Far from "abandon[ing] his philosophy of art" in this period, Schelling in fact revisits and revises his aesthetics, beginning with the *Münchener Rede* of 1807 and continuing through the drafts of *Die Weltalter* (1811–15).[4]

[1] For the influence of Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* on Kierkegaard, see Hühn 2009 and Kosch 2006a. Schopenhauer was also deeply influenced by this text; see Hühn forthcoming. From among Schelling's texts Heidegger 1971 singled out the *Freiheitsschrift* for its profundity. Vater 1975 argues that "we must understand that it is neither the author of the system of identity who attracts Heidegger nor the Schelling of the later positive philosophy, with its emphasis on divine transcendence, but the author of *The Investigations on Human Freedom*, the 'anthropomorphic' approach to system which takes human transcendence as the key to being's structure and integrity" (33).

[2] Fackenheim 1996 is not alone in maintaining that Schelling "loses interest in art and the philosophy of art. For the system of aesthetic idealism must be replaced by a philosophy of revelation" (91). According to Braeckman 2004 "Schelling's philosophical concern with art was only granted a short life," namely from 1798 to 1807 (552, fn. 2).

[3] Hereafter *Münchener Rede*.

[4] Seidel 1974 follows "experts" in placing the *Münchener Rede* within Schelling's identity period (171). In his recent study of Schelling's philosophy of art, Shaw 2010 argues that the *Freiheitsschrift* breaks with the *Münchener Rede* when what he views as Schelling's new "ecstatic account of freedom takes the place of artistic production" (115). On his reading, "the texts on art are oriented toward the future and a new mythology that could overcome the fragmentary nature of humanity," whereas from

Despite the fact that freedom had been a leading motif even in his earliest writings, the *Freiheitsschrift* is distinctive insofar as freedom is, for the first time, defined with reference to moral evil and goodness: "The real and vital concept," he explains, "is that freedom is the capacity for good and evil" (SW 1.7: 352–3; Schelling 2006: 23). The simplicity of this assertion belies the multiple alterations his position has undergone to allow him to make such a claim. In contrast to his earlier views, Schelling now affirms (1) the qualitative, rather than merely quantitative, distinction between the real and ideal that privileges *existing* over *Being*; (2) the resistance of the real to being taken up into thought; (3) moral "rigorism," according to which selfhood depends upon a decisive, transcendental choice between good and evil; (4) the unity of real and ideal as a *hierarchical* relationship, in which one has priority over (while also being dependent upon) the other; and (5) the manifestation of unity as a *dynamic* interaction of principles whose outcome is unforeseeable. The first and last of these bring him into closer alignment with his pre-identity period texts; taken together, however, they show the period of the *Freiheitsschrift* to be distinctive in Schelling's philosophical development.

What resources does this new position offer his aesthetics? This new philosophical outlook allows Schelling to emphasize the dynamic nature of aesthetic experience, to make the *attraction* of the observer to the object of beauty central to aesthetic experience, and to celebrate the irreducible particularity of beauty. In his identity period, beauty is superseded by philosophical knowledge precisely because, in contrast to the former, philosophical knowledge is self-sufficient, immediate, and transcends particularity. The intellectual intuition of the identity of subject and object, ideal and real, does not require the mediation of an external, beautiful object, as it once did in the *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800). In what we might call Schelling's "middle" period, however, the dependent, mediate, and particular, all of which are elements of aesthetic experience, are no longer viewed as liabilities but as strengths. Why is this so? First and foremost, in the middle period, the highest form of self-consciousness is not knowledge (of identity) but virtue: the ethical deed. More generally

1809 onwards Schelling's orients himself to the past, namely, to the "Fall of humanity," which is a "real historical event" (115). Schelling thereby "diminishes the role of art to the production of a work based either in the artist's individuality, or as a work of nostalgia for a lost connection to nature. Art is reduced to this role because Schelling now conceives of freedom, and virtue, as the highest activity of human being" (6–7). Shaw's study does not attend to the *Weltalter* and perhaps for this reason fails to acknowledge a revised aesthetics that rests on the continuity among the *Münchener Rede*, *Freiheitsschrift*, and the *Weltalter*.

speaking, the self emerges as a self only once a hierarchy of wills is achieved in an act of freedom: either self-will subordinates itself freely to the universal will (as in moral goodness, or virtue) or self-will freely asserts itself as superior (as in moral evil). In either case, the self achieves individuality only when it forges an identity of diverse, utterly opposed, and resistant elements by bringing them into a hierarchical relationship. The dynamism and naturalism of Schelling's early philosophy (the Philosophy of Nature and the *System of Transcendental Idealism*) is restored in Schelling's middle period, except that now the ethical is made ontologically central.

By drawing upon a new view of freedom qua ethical choice, the middle period enriches Schelling's aesthetics. We need only look carefully at his *Freiheitsschrift* in order to reconstruct a revised aesthetics from both the earlier *Münchener Rede* and the *Weltalter*. Not only is his aesthetics augmented in the ways described above, but it also regains at least to some extent the revelatory function it enjoyed in the *System of Transcendental Idealism*. In contrast to philosophical knowledge, which amounts only to knowledge of what is necessary, aesthetic experience is capable of unveiling the free and thus contingent act of the divine in which the real became ground and basis of the ideal in the divine decision to create the world. According to Schelling, because the divine became a self insofar as its decision achieves the proper, virtuous hierarchy in which real (self-will) freely subordinates itself to the ideal (universal will), aesthetic experience gives us reason to think that virtue is also possible for us.

I Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift*: the foundation for a revised aesthetics

In Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift*, the human experience of freedom and ethical choice is the central and grounding dynamic of his metaphysics. Just as the human self is brought into existence through a fundamental and timeless ethical decision, so too are God and nature. The hierarchy achieved through ethical choice, for instance, transforms his conception of the absolute: what was once an enveloping oneness in his Identity Philosophy is now an active, contingently emerging and individuating personality thanks to the hierarchy of principles that its ethical choice achieves. Even nature must be conceived of in similar terms: going further than his Philosophy of Nature, which embraces the Kantian conception of matter as a dynamic balance of opposing forces, Schelling conceives of nature as either ordered or disordered depending upon

whether the proper hierarchy of these dynamic principles has been achieved.[5]

Schelling's debt to Kant's *Religion* is all too often ignored in readings of this text, but its influence is undeniable.[6] Schelling depends upon the *Religion* for his view of our transcendental choice of moral character, his moral rigorism, his understanding of a hierarchical relationship of wills, and his insistence that, contrary to rationalist accounts, evil originates solely in the will, not in nature. Kant argues in the *Religion*[7] that, in order to explain our "propensity" [*Hang*] to evil, the moral choices we consciously make in time must ultimately be grounded in a fundamental decision that occurs outside of time; he calls this fundamental choice our "intelligible deed."[8] It is a choice of priority. We cannot decide against, or repudiate, the moral law (otherwise, we would repudiate the standard that informs us of our freedom, or the ability to resist our inclinations). Rather, we choose whether to prioritize either the moral law or self-love in all of our volitions.

Kant divides the will into *Wille*, or reason in its legislative function, and *Willkür*, or reason in its executive function.[9] The moral law is thus distinguished from the power of choice, which is free because (as Kant explains in the *Metaphysics of Morals*) "it can be determined by pure reason" but not by impulses.[10] Through the power of choice [*Willkür*], an agent decides "which of the two [the moral law or the incentives of self-love] he makes the condition of the other."[11] Kant concludes that we all choose to make "the incentives of self-love and [our] inclinations the

[5] While God's free decision brings nature into existence, humanity's choice for evil undermines and corrupts nature's order (SW 1.7: 366; Schelling 2006: 34–5). According to Jähnig 1989, Kant's *Metaphysical Foundations of the Natural Science* shows him "the possibility of universalizing the principle of the organism" by allowing him to view the "core of reality . . . as *energy* rather than matter. More importantly, the idea that matter arises out of a combination of different forces implies the idea of immanently unfolding *order* (*Gesetzmässigkeit*), whereby, arising out of diversity, matter constitutes itself as a unity"; attractive and repulsive forces become, for Schelling, "attraction" and "expansion" so that the dualism can be seen to "unfold from one central point" (225).

[6] In an explicit reference to Kant, Schelling remarks: "Only this evil, contracted through our own act but from birth, can on that account [*daher*] be called radical evil; and it is remarkable how Kant, who had not raised himself in theory to a transcendental act that determines all human Being, was led in his later investigations, merely by faithful observation of the phenomena of moral judgment, to the recognition of, as he expressed it, a subjective ground of human actions preceding every act apparent to the senses but that itself must be nonetheless an *actus* of freedom" (SW 1.7: 388; Schelling 2006: 53).

[7] All references to Kant's *Religion* are from Kant 1998.

[8] *Religion*, Kant AA 06: 32.

[9] Allison 1990: 129. Allison 2001b also provides an incisive defense of Kant against Hannah Arendt's early critique of the *Religion*'s account of radical evil.

[10] MM, Kant AA 06: 214.

[11] *Religion*, Kant AA 06: 36.

condition of compliance with the moral law";[12] in short, all humans are morally evil. No middle ground, or mixed position, is possible: since the moral law sometimes fails to move each of us adequately (fails to serve as our sole incentive), we must have subordinated the moral law to other incentives.[13]

Kant assumes that we all know the moral law and that it affects us as incentive through moral feeling; this is our predisposition to humanity, or "the susceptibility of respect for the moral law as of itself a sufficient incentive to the power of choice."[14] But this predisposition does not entail our moral goodness, since as human beings we also have inclinations toward pleasure and happiness and these inclinations offer ends that, if pursued or attained, might lead us to violate the moral law. This is why goodness for us is the result of a choice: it requires us to place the moral law above self-love and thus to pursue those ends only if our principle of action is compatible with or required by the moral law. Similarly, we choose an evil moral character by actively subordinating the moral law to self-love. For Kant, the reason why one's power of choice is affected by inclination in experience is because one has already, in the original intelligible deed, freely chosen to subordinate the moral law to self-love. In doing so, we open ourselves up to temptation in experience, having freely relinquished what matters most – our own dignity and the dignity of other human beings – and we do so for the sake of ends simply given to us through inclination. As a result, we have no disinterested way of determining which ends to pursue and which ones not to pursue. In this original choice to reject our (and others') dignity we "make it [our] basic principle to have no basic principle."[15]

Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* is largely in agreement with Kant's view so far. Thus, many commentators miss the mark when trying to identify the true disagreement between Kant and Schelling. Those who attend only to Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* or second *Critique* applaud Schelling for being able to explain the possibility of evil by defining freedom, in its positive sense, as the freedom of choice between good and evil.[16] For others, Schelling apparently distinguishes himself by

[12] *Religion*, Kant AA 06: 36. [13] *Religion*, Kant AA 06: 24–5. [14] *Religion*, Kant AA 06: 27.
[15] MM, Kant AA 06: 420.
[16] Lauer 2010, for instance, limits Kant's view of freedom to its articulation in Section III of the *Groundwork*, arguing that "only action in accordance with the moral law is free" (*Groundwork*, Kant AA 04: 447) (147). Likewise, Schalow 1994 overlooks Kant's *Religion* and the intelligible deed, claiming that Schelling distinguishes himself from Kant by "uncover[ing] the roots of human freedom beyond its confinement to the limited choices we make" (220).

refusing to identify self-love as the origin of evil and to render it "comprehensible," as Kant purportedly does.[17] But Kant himself admits that "there is no conceivable ground for us . . . from which moral evil could first have come in us";[18] for Kant, in other words, explaining evil as the prioritization of self-love over the moral law does not render evil comprehensible.

At the same time, we should not conclude that Kant's inability to explain evil shows that he takes evil to be irrational and thus ultimately endorses the rationalistic position that Schelling criticizes in the *Freiheitsschrift*.[19] Kant admits that evil is incomprehensible because of his insistence that all of our "predispositions" are "not only (negatively) *good* (they do not resist the moral law) but they are also predispositions *to the good* (they demand compliance with it)."[20] These predispositions include not only the predisposition to personality, but also the two predispositions to self-love: the predisposition to animality, which includes the inclinations for self-preservation, species propagation, and "the social drive," and the predisposition to humanity, which includes the inclination to gain equal worth in comparison with others.[21] We have to exert extra effort to convert these inclinations into vices,[22] and this is what sets Kant's view apart from other rationalistic theories. Kant, like Schelling, refuses to lay the blame for evil at the foot of nature. Kant, however, is left with the result that there is no reason for evil; its origin is "inscrutable." The only other option, he thinks, would be to posit an original predisposition for evil, but that would absolve us from responsibility for these acts.

[17] For Wirth 2004, radical evil according to Kant "is human freedom's propensity for self-love"; because of this, "Kant did not see at all . . . [that] radical evil cannot be said to be in any way understandable" (221).

[18] *Religion*, Kant AA 06: 43.

[19] According to Kosch 2006a, Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* responds to what Kosch believes Schelling views as Kant's rationalistic notion of freedom, according to which evil is irrational. Kant's claim in the *Religion* that freedom is the choice between good and evil is thus (according to Kosch's reading) ultimately revoked in the *Metaphysics of Morals* where Kant characterizes evil as an "inability" (MM, Kant AA 06: 227) (Kosch 2006a: 62). It is true that Kant defines freedom in the *Metaphysics of Morals* without reference to evil, but this is because he must include the freedom of non-human agents, who have no self-love. Moreover, neither choosing against the law nor choosing for the law can be made "understandable": freedom of choice in general cannot be made understandable because we cannot "present *theoretically* freedom as a *noumenon*" (MM, Kant AA 06: 226). Finally, though Kant characterizes evil as an "inability," he does so because he views evil as a failure and thus a misuse of freedom that undermines itself. Schelling speaks in similar terms in the *Freiheitsschrift*: "This principle becomes actual for and against anyone who now provokes it by misusing self-will raised to the level of selfhood" (SW 1.7: 390–1; Schelling 2006: 55); in evil "man transgresses from authentic Being into non-Being" (SW 1.7: 390–1; Schelling 2006: 55); in choosing evil the self "loses its initial freedom" (SW 1.7: 392–3; Schelling 2006: 56).

[20] *Religion*, Kant AA 06: 28. [21] *Religion*, Kant AA 06: 26–8. [22] *Religion*, Kant AA 06: 26–8.

Schelling tries to solve this problem by accepting wholeheartedly that there is no reason for evil. The reason for evil, we might say, resists comprehension. It is that which is not capable of being taken up into thought: the *will* of selfhood. In effect, Schelling elevates Kant's "self-love" to the level of will and sets it in opposition to the universal will. It is a will that is mixed with desire, or craving, for "being." For Kant, self-love is not a will, a faculty of determination, but simply signifies the natural inclinations to preserve and gratify the self and to care about how one compares to others. It can become "self-conceit" only if given priority by *Willkür*. Kant protects these predispositions, and thus nature, from blame for our moral evil precisely because these predispositions are not identified with the will. Indeed, these predispositions do not stand in opposition to, but are potentially aligned with, *Wille*. The deck seems to be stacked against moral evil, which is why Kant finds our intelligible deed incomprehensible.

Since Schelling raises Kant's self-love to the status of a will, he accepts an original tension between this will and the universal will. This tension cannot be articulated as a full-fledged contradiction, but must eventually be resolved one way or the other.[23] So an evil character still requires a decision, to be sure, in which we prioritize self-love. Still, Schelling has posited a will that actively resists the moral law. Because he views selfhood as a will, he avoids the rationalistic position that identifies nature as the origin of evil; selfhood is that which makes both nature and virtue possible by serving as their basis. This allows him to view the ground of evil as "positive": "The ground of evil must lie, therefore, not only in something generally positive but rather in that which is most positive in what nature contains, as is actually the case in our view, since it lies in the revealed centrum or primal will of the first ground" (Schelling 2006: 37). In addition, positing such a "will" is not enough to predict moral evil: both virtue and moral evil still require a free and unforeseeable decision that results in a hierarchy of wills. Either the will of selfhood submits to the universal principle, thus allowing for a virtuous moral character, or the universal principle serves as the ground of selfhood, in which case an evil character takes root. The choice is not one that the already constituted self makes; it is the choice that constitutes the self to begin with. At bottom this fundamental choice is either a choice to resist one's own "revelation,"

[23] Jähnig 1989 argues that "'will' is here to be understood not as a particular faculty existing along beside feeling [*Gemüt*] and spirit [*Geist*]. It is instead their synthesis, the synthesis of striving and thinking. It bridges the gap between nature and spirit, the real and the ideal, and thereby elevates the lower into the higher. This is the justification of Schelling's assertion that the most profound insight of philosophy is the realization that 'primordial being is will'" (228).

and thus to resist taking responsibility by acknowledging one's relation to others, or it is a choice to reveal oneself by taking responsibility in full acknowledgment of one's relation to others.

Whereas for Kant the choice for evil is "inscrutable" because all of our predispositions aim toward the good, for Schelling the opposite is the case: the choice for good is inscrutable because virtue requires the will of selfhood to sacrifice itself, to serve as mere ground in which the universal will can reveal itself. The will of selfhood contains nothing that leads one to expect such sacrifice to occur, even as it does in the case of the divine. For Schelling, goodness, not evil, becomes the greatest mystery of all.

In addition to identifying self-love as an original will, Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* also distinguishes itself from Kant's by generalizing our experience of freedom and of the contradiction of wills. The very dynamic at work in the ethical context operates at the metaphysical level and is used to explain individuation, divine existence, the creation of nature, and even predication (the possibility of knowledge). God's decision in favor of revelation, for instance, brings not only nature and humanity into existence, but also the divine as an existing personality. The divine chooses to reveal itself once it decides to limit itself by descending into the real (the divine ground or basis) and allowing nature and humanity to exist independently in this ground. Furthermore, the divine becomes a fully existing personality only if humanity (as the divine within nature) makes the same free decision to allow selfhood to serve as the ground in which the universal will (the ideal principle) can reveal itself. For Kant, only human beings must make the choice between good and evil because they are the only rational beings with predispositions to self-love; other conceivable rational beings (angels, God) do not have predispositions that must be subordinated to the moral law. For Schelling, however, nothing can exist as an individual without the real principle, the will of selfhood, as its ground. In other words, even the divine has a will of selfhood that must limit itself and thereby allow itself to serve as the ground for the universal will in order for the divine personality to emerge.[24]

In *Prädikation und Genesis* Wolfram Hogrebe makes a convincing case that this metaphysical view also allows the later Schelling to address the problem of predication, or how the real has been "caught" in the "nets" of reason. Knowledge presupposes that the proposition Fx agrees with

[24] According to the *Weltalter*, "Being infinite is for itself not a perfection. It is rather the marker of that which is imperfect. The perfected is precisely that which is itself full, concluded, finished" (SW 1.8: 212; Schelling 2000: 7).

something real that is itself an x that is F. This something has a real or metaphysical structure that is compatible with the formal (ideal) structure of the proposition or judgment. Schelling believes that this structure is achieved when two originally separate and independent principles comport to one another in a certain way. The first principle – "das pronominale Sein" or "the pure subject of being" – has the character of being an individual and resists predication. It is the *something* [*irgendetwas*] that exists without being a determinate something (something that exists *as* something). The second principle – "das prädikative Sein" – is predicative being without the subject it predicates, and thus has the quality of beyond or outside of itself. Hogrebe describes this second principle as *mere relation*. In order for both to exist, something must be sacrificed from each; each must sacrifice being everything if both are to exist at once. The third proposition is the unity achieved through the Fx structure, what Schelling calls "das propositionale Sein."[25] They can only be made compatible with one another if they are brought into a relation that allows one to be the vehicle through which the other is expressed.

The divine's free decision to create a world unifies these two mutually excluding principles. The "ground" or real in God subordinates itself to the ideal in an ethical and spontaneous act of self-sacrifice. Importantly, even once the real principle subordinates itself to the ideal as its ground or basis, the real does not thereby relinquish its tendency to resist the ideal. There is always an "indivisible remainder" that is rationally inaccessible.[26] In the *Weltalter* we see that this resistance manifests itself materially: insofar as the real subordinates itself to the ideal, it attracts the attention, so to speak, of the ideal. This sets the stage for mutual recognition: while the real recognizes the ideal as higher, and attracts its attention through subordination, the ideal acknowledges its own dependence upon the real.

Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* allows his middle period to distinguish itself from the identity period in the following ways. Freedom is now defined as the freedom of choosing between good and evil, and the "identity" of real and ideal is a hierarchical relation of ground and consequent. Identity is

[25] Hogrebe 1989: 70–2.

[26] For this reason, Schelling's *Freiheitsschrift* is often characterized as taking a clear step beyond idealism. See Frank 1975 and 1989, as well as Snow 1996 and Schulz 1955. Linker 2000 argues that "[l]ong before Heidegger, Gadamer, and Derrida, Schelling set out to uncover the radical finitude and contingency of all human attempts at self-sufficiency as well as to demonstrate the impossibility of a self-grounding human project" (375). In the Continental tradition, Schelling is appreciated for his resistance to the totalizing power of reason; see Wirth 2003 and Žižek 1997, who draws favorable comparisons among Schelling, Levinas, Deleuze, Kierkegaard, and Kafka.

thus an ethical achievement, a historical deed, contingent rather than necessary. The virtuous act that forges this identity is an act of love and sacrifice. Love, rather than reason, is the bond or link that unites real and ideal in this hierarchy. The *Freiheitsschrift* is not the first text to signal Schelling's turn to the middle period, however, for we can locate these elements in the *Münchener Rede*. Because of this, we have good reason to expect that his aesthetics will undergo its own transformation.

II Schelling's revised aesthetics

Because accounts of Schelling's aesthetics tend to attend exclusively to his *System of Transcendental Idealism* and *Philosophy of Art*, the latter of which is grounded in the metaphysics of his identity period, they fail to recognize that the *Münchener Rede* heralds the new metaphysical position that becomes clarified in the *Freiheitsschrift* and the *Weltalter*. Even Devin Shaw, who takes care to examine both the *Münchener Rede* and the *Stuttgart Private Lecture Course* (1810), insists that only the latter is aligned with the *Freiheitsschrift*. To his mind, the *Stuttgart Private Lecture Course* marks a "decisive break with the speech" because, in contrast to the unapologetic pantheism of the latter, the former focuses on the "fall of man," a historical event at the center of the *Freiheitsschrift*.[27] Whereas the speech celebrates art, rather than religion, as the "expression of the highest potency" "where innocence is restored," the seminars mark the point at which Schelling moves beyond a concern with art apparently because art is now merely "the expression of the longing for a lost object, and even a kind of naivety."[28] There are several reasons, however, why we should question this assessment.

The *Münchener Rede* distinguishes itself from earlier texts and brings itself into line with the *Freiheitsschrift* by conceiving of creation, artistic and otherwise, as a quasi-moral act of self-limitation through which the ideal achieves determinate form. Creation (and the striving for actuality), through which the ideal appears, is not conceived by the Philosophy of Nature as a moral act; and it is certainly not viewed as such by the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, even if both of these acknowledge the origin as a spontaneous act.[29] Though the *Philosophy of Art* does, arguably, view

[27] Shaw 2010: 129–30. [28] Shaw 2010: 134.

[29] Steinkamp 1999 facilitates the comparison of the *System of Transcendental Idealism* and the *Freiheitsschrift* by providing a reading of the *System of Transcendental Idealism* as a theory of the will.

creation (eternal nature) as good, its goodness is not predicated upon the ideal taking on determinate form. Rather, goodness is presented simply as the identity of freedom and necessity in the absolute: creation follows necessarily (and logically) from the idea of the absolute (SW 1.5: 373–4; Schelling 1989b: 23).[30] In the *Münchener Rede*, however, Schelling draws a parallel between the act of "descending into form" and the virtuous act of limiting oneself. As a result, the unifying principle according to the speech is not reason, as in the identity period, but self-sacrificial love, and the highest of all human activities is virtue, rather than philosophy. Whereas the *Philosophy of Art* minimizes the developmental nature of the creative process, the speech emphasizes and endorses it. Beauty, moreover, is called upon to give us insight into the divine's historical act of creation: that goodness – the self-willed and thus free descent into form – is the "ground of creation." Finally, the dynamic of attraction to beauty, which is spelled out most clearly in the *Weltalter*, also distinguishes the *Münchener Rede* from the *Philosophy of Art*.[31]

In the speech, for instance, Schelling invests the principles of beauty and artistic production with moral significance. He calls the unconscious the *formal* principle, the "energy of singleness, and thus of individuality" (SW 1.7: 303–4; Schelling 1845: 12). It is the new version of the *System of Transcendental Idealism*'s unconscious force and the *Philosophy of Art*'s principle of poesy. This principle is the source of limitation for the work

[30] Like the *System of Transcendental Idealism* and the *Philosophy of Art*, the *Münchener Rede* acknowledges an antithesis that is felt by the artist, though the *Philosophy of Art* does not emphasize the developmental nature of that contradiction. Indeed, the *Philosophy of Art* draws a favorable comparison between divine and human creativity to the extent that the developmental process is not emphasized: the creation (eternal nature) is coeternal with the absolute, and the phenomenal realm is not considered *created*. Because of this, the *Philosophy of Art*'s conception of creation should be distinguished from what we find in the Philosophy of Nature, the *System of Transcendental Idealism* and the *Münchener Rede*. Thus, the *Münchener Rede* returns to a concern with origins and retrieves a conception of divine creation, which is presented first in the Philosophy of Nature and informs the *System of Transcendental Idealism*'s conception of artistic creativity. This conception presents creativity as the developmental process through which the ideal is given determinate form. We see the re-emphasis of creation as developmental most clearly in the *Münchener Rede*'s conception of the essences themselves. Much like the "actants" in the Philosophy of Nature, the essences *strive* toward actuality: "In nature and art, the essence first strives after actuality or expression of itself in the particular . . . for without limitation the limitless could not appear" (SW 1.7: 309–10; Schelling 1845: 19). The essences (and thus the absolute) are no longer conceived of as immutable and self-sufficient, for expression through determinate form is a *fulfillment* of their lack of reality in the absolute.

[31] One telling indication that Schelling has shifted away from his identity period aesthetics in the *Münchener Rede* is his treatment of Johann Winckelmann. While Winckelmann is only celebrated in the *Philosophy of Art*, the *Münchener Rede* qualifies this praise, arguing that his theory fails to acknowledge the "link" that binds form and idea (SW 1.7: 295–6; Schelling 1845: 5–6).

of art, but this limiting energy does not produce an "empty shell . . . of the individual"; rather, since the "limit is a measure which the creative energy gives itself," so too does the work produced become an "individual" (SW 1.7: 303–4; Schelling 1845: 12). This limiting energy can seem "hard" and "severe," but without it, no life would be possible. The universal principle, in contrast, is related to the eternal Ideas; it provides content, and allows art to be grasped. Its analogues are the *System of Transcendental Idealism*'s conscious force and the *Philosophy of Art*'s principle of art. The "soul," or bond between the two, "is not the individualizing principle in man, but that by which he elevates himself above all selfness; it is that by which he is capable of self-sacrifice and disinterested love, and what is the highest still of the contemplation and perception of the being of things, and thus of art" (SW 1.7: 311–12; Schelling 1845: 20).

Schelling argues that the midpoint (soul, or bond) becomes visible in some works of art as "grace" and "love." In the statue of Niobe, who witnesses the destruction of her children, the link reveals itself as love: "in this is presented the mother as such, who, not being one, still is, and by an eternal link remains, united with the beloved ones" (SW 1.7: 314–15; Schelling 1845: 23). Schelling then draws the more general conclusion: "Grace is the means of connection between moral goodness and sensuous appearance, thus it is self-evident that art must tend from all sides toward it, as its center" (SW 1.7: 315–16; Schelling 1845: 23). The harmony between sensuous appearance and moral goodness is visible through grace.[32]

The artist can hope to locate the midpoint in part by ascending to the eternal Ideas with the help of his soul. But this is not enough: "As the entire creation is but a work of the highest [renunciation (*Entäusserung*)],[33] the artist must first deny himself, and descend into the particular, not shunning the remoteness nor the pain, nay, torment of form" (SW 1.7: 303–4; Schelling 1845: 11). The Ideas can become manifest through the formal principle, through the self-limitation (as opposed to external limitation) of the artist and the presentation of the Ideas in finite form. This antagonism in the artist's mind between the soul, or that which

[32] The contrast between the analyses of Niobe here and in the *Philosophy of Art* is noteworthy. In the latter, he prefaces his remarks by reminding us that "the realm of ideas is the realm of authentic and clear conceptions, just as the phenomenal realm is that of false, dark, and confused conceptions"; it is only in the realm of ideas, or the absolute, that oppositions "become one"; thus, Niobe is significant not for signifying that love is the bond of creation, but rather because it demonstrates identity in the absolute by exhibiting a "peaceful and stable soul in the midst of passion" (SW 1.5: 557; Schelling 1989b: 153).

[33] In Schelling 1845, Johnson translates *Entäusserung* as "manifestation" (12).

"comprehends the idea of immaterial beauty," and the formal principle, or "that which embodies it" (SW 1.7: 300; Schelling 1845: 8), is necessary in order that "the unity of being as the highest grace and atonement of all powers should ensue" (SW 1.7: 311–12; Schelling 1845: 20).

While the moral significance of a denial of self is clear, Schelling does not explain how an artist's "descent" into the formal, or individualizing, principle is a denial of self. We might think that it must be the other way around: denial of self occurs in the ascent to the eternal Ideas through the universalizing principle. We can make sense of this if we consider the metaphysics of the *Freiheitsschrift*, according to which the first principle to assert itself serves as the ground or basis of the second's revelation. Moreover, self-sacrifice is also required for the universalizing principle, which has to be willing to relinquish its own expansiveness and accept the "torment" of form. Form is that which separates us as individuals from others, whereas the universal, on its own, dissolves divisions. In order for the universal to appear (as grace and love), there must be unity, to be sure, but without the complete dissolution of individuals. Schelling explains, "If there were no severity, mildness could not exist; and if unity must be felt, it can only be by force of individuality, isolation, and antagonism" (SW 1.7: 309–10; Schelling 1845: 19).

An important passage makes clear that the speech orients itself to the past as much as it proposes a future state of reconciliation through art. And while it may make no mention of the fall of man, the speech by no means neglects the other metaphysically and ethically significant historical event that is made central in the *Freiheitsschrift*, namely, the divine act of creation:

> This beauty, which results from the perfect union of moral goodness with sensuous grace, wherever we find it, seizes upon and enchants us with the power of a miracle. For as the spirit of nature elsewhere universally shows itself independent of, and in a certain sense, opposing the soul, so here it seems by a voluntary coincidence, and as if by the inner fire of a divine love, to commingle with it. And the beholder is overtaken with sudden clearness, by the remembrance of the original unity of the bond of nature and of the soul, by the certainty that all antithesis or opposition is but apparent – that love is the bond of all being, and that pure goodness is the ground and significance of the whole creation. Here art seems to go beyond itself, and to make itself again a means to itself. At this height, sensuous grace becomes merely veil and body to a still higher life; what was before a whole is created as a part; and the highest relation of art to nature is thereby arrived at, in that it makes nature the medium of manifesting the soul in itself. (SW 1.7: 315–16; Schelling 1845: 24)

According to the speech, artistic beauty is significant for its ability to offer evidence of the divine's historical deed. When we see beauty, we "remember" that love is the "bond of all being," that it unifies every individual with the other, and that goodness is the "ground and significance" of creation. Beauty reflects the hierarchical relationship of principles in the divine decision because beauty is manifest only when the principles of individuality and universality appear to have been unified through love and sacrifice into a hierarchical relation of ground and consequent, of basis and revelation.

Schelling's speech is continuous not only with the *Freiheitsschrift*, but also with the *Weltalter*.[34] In fact, the *Weltalter* goes even further than the *Freiheitsschrift* by reiterating the speech's new understanding of beauty and artistic creation and by providing a metaphysical explanation for an important aesthetic phenomenon that is mentioned in the speech: the attraction of the observer to the object of beauty. Without explaining why or how, the above passage insists that beauty "enchants" us, "seizes upon" us, and strikes us "with the power of a miracle." Presumably it affects us so strongly for the same reason that it reflects the divine decision: its principles are aligned in the proper way. Still, it is only in the *Weltalter* that we find a metaphysical explanation for why this alignment of principles should have such an effect.

Schelling's *Weltalter* continues and deepens the *Freiheitsschrift*'s exploration of the divine decision to create the world, illuminating a complex dynamic of subordination, withdrawal, differentiation, attraction, and love. The phenomenon of beauty plays a central role in this dynamic. The "Godhead" (God's essence or "pure will") becomes an actual will when "another" – God's nature – subordinates itself to the pure will as the vehicle through which that will can be actualized. Insofar as God's nature subordinates itself to God's pure will, it becomes "prime matter," or nature differentiated into three parts, the real (A^1), the ideal (A^2) and the bond (A^3), each of which plays a role in generating images, ideas, or archetypes of a merely possible nature. These images, the "highest" of which is of humanity, are presented to the Godhead, which then becomes conscious of the decision of whether to bring this nature into existence. Prime matter, in other words, is a perfect, though as of yet uncreated, world. It has, along the lines of Hogrebe's view, assumed the metaphysical structure necessary for predication. In addition, given Schelling's middle period

[34] Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the *Weltalter* are taken from the 1815 version.

appropriation of the view of the human will in Kant's *Religion*, this preliminary nature also embodies an inner ethical structure that can be characterized as virtue, self-sacrifice, and love.

In one passage Schelling explains the phenomenon of beauty by likening the beautiful object to "prime matter," or that which has proven to be the nature of God through its subordination to the Godhead. God's nature becomes "prime matter" insofar as it prepares itself as that material or vehicle by showing that it has made the spiritual within it – the image or idea – transparent or manifest. This "being," which is more precisely the image of "a consummate spiritual-corporeal being" (SW 1.8: 281; Schelling 2000: 60), i.e., the human being, has been "liberated" not by being released from matter but by matter becoming transparent to it:

> Yet this being draws nigh to its liberation especially in organic nature. It is the oil by which the green of plants is satiated. It is the balm of life in which health has its origin. It is discernible in what shines through the flesh and the eyes, in that undeniably physical outflow whereby the presence of the pure, the healthy, and the delightful are at work on us in a charitably liberating way. Nay, it is incontestably discernible in the unspeakable, which streams forth as grace into transfigured corporeality in which even the barbarian is instinctively moved. The joyful amazement that consummate beauty posits to the cultivated perhaps has its main basis in the feeling that beauty brings matter before our eyes in its divine and, so to speak, primordial state. Nay, as if it were the object of an originary Love, this being still now, as in primordial time, draws Love to itself, and it is, because always only indicating itself, but never as something to grasp or to possess, the goal of the inclination which is always stirring, but never satiated. (SW 1.8: 284; Schelling 2000: 62)

According to the metaphysical underpinnings of the *Weltalter*, the higher potency (A^2) is drawn to the now liberated "being" within A^1. This is a twofold process. First, the second potency "feels" or notices the first potency as its "being" or basis only once the first potency withdraws or pulls away through its subordination to the higher. The subordination of the first potency to the second also entails the division and hierarchy of principles (A, B, and their bond) within the first potency. Second, the higher potency feels the absence or lack of the first potency and is attracted to the first potency, for the higher potency sees in the lower potency the manifestation of images which are contained within itself only prototypically. Indeed, the A^2 also first becomes aware of itself because of the subordination of the first potency. A similar process of subordination, differentiation, and withdrawal occurs in the other potencies and

eventually attracts the Godhead itself toward these images.[35] Insofar as the Godhead desires revelation it recognizes its dependence upon the self-sacrifice of nature; indeed, it first feels itself, or becomes aware of itself, through the subordination and withdrawal of nature. Following the Godhead's attraction to eternal nature is its free decision to reveal itself and bring nature into existence out of love.

Beauty, both natural and artistic, is a visible manifestation of the proper alignment of inner principles. To be sure, beauty is only skin deep in both cases, for what is required here is only that beauty *seems* to bring matter before our eyes in its primordial, perfectly ordered, state.[36] In both cases, though beauty does not have to reflect an alignment of actually *living* principles, the "soul-like essence" can still (seem to) appear as long as the form in which it is manifest is a perfect vehicle for that essence. But since the essence is "always ready to overflow" even if it is "always held again" (SW 1.8: 283; Schelling 2000: 61), the vehicle must also appear to contain something that would seem to exceed its own limits.

Because the liberation of the essence is possible only through "love," i.e., the free alignment of principles, so too does this "bond" also seem to appear when something is beautiful to us. This is precisely what is maintained in *Münchener Rede*, before Schelling had offered the metaphysical basis on which that account of beauty and artistic creativity arguably rests. There he explains that both the "unity" (the bond) and the "limitless" (or the essence) are only visible through "the force of individuality" and "limitation" (SW 1.7: 309–10; Schelling 1845: 19).

Though the unity reflected in the case of beauty is not, strictly speaking, a living unity, as it would be in the case of an organism or of human goodness, the unity that appears in beauty is anything but static. Schelling is committed in this period to a dynamic interaction of fundamental forces within unity. As he maintains in the *Weltalter*, the essences or images are the "inner spirit of life" (SW 1.8: 284; Schelling 2000: 62). Schelling does not spell out how the essence *as* a living "spirit of life" appears in the case of beauty. But we can infer from the above passage that the essence appears as

[35] The first "potency" (A^1) ultimately serves as the ground of corporeal nature, while the second potency (A^2) serves as the ground of spiritual nature. The third principle (A^3), the "immediate subject" or "substratum" of the Godhead, is the "universal soul or the link between God and the world" (SW 1.8: 251; Schelling 2000: 37). Through a complex process of withdrawal and attraction, the first two potencies project the images of a future world through the third potency to the Godhead; thus, the A^3 serves as the "mirror" in which the Godhead can view these images. The A^3 allows the Godhead to orient itself toward objective nature.

[36] Schelling explains in the *Münchener Rede* that "the works of art are only in appearance and on the surface animated" (SW 1.7: 302; Schelling 1845: 10).

a living essence and the unity appears as a living unity insofar as the object of beauty seems to us to be an individual. The *Münchener Rede* supports such an interpretation, where Schelling explains that "the perfection of a thing is the creative life in it, its power of asserting its own individuality" (SW 1.7: 294–5; Schelling 1845: 4). One of Schelling's main aims in this speech is to show that, as in nature, there is no development in art without the "self-development" of the ideal (SW 1.7: 295–6; Schelling 1845: 5). But the ideal may develop only with a basis in which to do so. In other words, the beautiful object acquires "a self-sufficing life, independent of the producing life" (SW 1.7: 300–1; Schelling 1845: 9) thanks to the restricting and containing power of its particular form:

> When the artist recognizes the aspect and being of the in-dwelling creative idea, and produces that, he makes the individual a world in itself – a species, and eternal type; he who has seized upon the essential need not fear hardness and severity, for they are the conditions of life. (SW 1.7: 303–4; Schelling 1845: 11)

We have arrived at the somewhat counterintuitive conclusion that the essence appears in the case of beauty as a living spirit only because its *form*, or basis, allows the object to appear to be an independent individual, i.e., independent of the "producing life" of the artist. The appearance of a living essence requires the appearance of a living unity. Beauty is thereby separated from craft, whose product does not appear as independent of the intent of its maker, but as utterly shaped by it. Schelling's commitment to the basis as the "condition of life" is thereby clearly maintained.

The *Weltalter*'s description of the Godhead's consciousness of prime matter allows us to infer the state of mind of the observer of beauty. In addition to the feeling of attraction to the images, the divine state of mind is described as one in which the principles are not only in harmony with one another, but also in a reciprocal relation of play. This is a state of "bliss" for the Godhead in which prime matter, or "eternal nature," is "at play with itself" (SW 1.8: 289; Schelling 2000: 66). The production of images for the Godhead is characterized as a time when "Wisdom *played* – not on the earth, for there was no earth yet – on *God's* earth, on what is ground and soil to God" (SW 1.8: 297; Schelling 2000: 71). In an earlier version of the *Weltalter* (1811), Schelling even describes it as the "playful delight in the initial life of God" [*spielende Lust im anfänglichen Leben Gottes*].[37]

[37] Schelling explains that "This playful delight in the initial life of God seems to have been well recognized by the ancients, which they eloquently called wisdom – an immaculate mirror of the divine power and an image of his goodness." (Diese Spielende Lust im anfänglichen Leben Gottes scheinen die Alten wohl

The production of natural forms and the artistic production of beautiful art are analogues of the production of images in the divine imagination. Schelling explains, "the only difference between nature and the artist is that with nature the material is not outside the artist but rather one with it and inwardly growing together with it" (SW 1.8: 276; Schelling 2000: 56). The similarity Schelling sees between the artist and productive nature leads him to describe nature in artistic terms: "Who does not know the independent soul if they have seen the art, inwardly bound yet simultaneously free, nay, arbitrarily playing, in the great ladder of the organic essence, even in the gradual cultivation of the particular parts?" (SW 1.8: 276; Schelling 2000: 56). Even the production of images within the divine imagination is taken to be artistic. Schelling claims that the creations of eternal nature, i.e., the essences, are "the exterior of an artist who grows together with her material and indicates what degree of liberation the supremely interior being has reached" (SW 1.8: 279; Schelling 2000: 58). In other words, the creations of nature are produced when nature as material works itself into a form that is transparent to the ideal at its interior.

The playful relationship among the principles within the first potency requires the soul's love of the "confinement" within the "contracting force" (SW 1.8: 278; Schelling 2000: 57). As we have seen, without the "material" that is "handed over" to the soul as its means or vehicle, the soul would never appear (SW 1.8: 278; Schelling 2000: 57). This love of confinement is the beginning of what Schelling calls the soul's artistic *Lust*, "because overcoming the contrarily striving forces gently and gradually pleases it" (SW 1.8: 278; Schelling 2000: 58). Indeed, Schelling explains that what must be accomplished in order for the soul to appear is that the forces within nature move from an antagonistic relationship to a "free" and "vital antithesis": "The supremely interior, the soul can only become evident, however, in the relationship in which the contrarily striving forces are brought to a reciprocal freedom and independence or to a vital, mobile antithesis" (SW 1.8: 278; Schelling 2000: 58). This transition is from a striving of each principle for its own existence to a "free desire" within eternal nature that "is at play with itself" (SW 1.8: 289; Schelling 2000: 66). The soul's presence within eternal nature allows the other forces to subordinate freely to it, and to move from a selfish desire for existence to a "free" one.[38]

erkannt zu haben, welche sie ausdrucksvoll die Weisheit nennen, einen unbefleckten Spiegel der göttlichen Kraft und . . . ein Bild seiner Gütigkeit. [Schelling 1946: 30, my own translation]).

[38] Schelling's description of the dynamic relationship of principles brings to mind Kant's theory of the harmony of the faculties. By characterizing the dynamic as "free" Schelling seems to mean something similar either to what Kant describes as a "free" or "intellectual interest" in the

The new metaphysics introduced by the *Freiheitsschrift* and clarified in the *Weltalter* allows Schelling to celebrate artistic productivity as the process through which the object achieves a life of its own, much in the way that he tries to explain how humanity is both divinely created and yet freely individuates itself. Our attraction to beauty is given metaphysical underpinnings and understood in terms of the recognition of one's dependence and lack as well as of the object's apparent achievement of quasi-ethical hierarchy and individuation. Additionally, the pleasure in perceiving beauty is understood along Kantian lines as a free and dynamic play of these principles made possible by the hierarchical relationship they have achieved. Aesthetics may not be at the forefront of Schelling's mind in this period, but that only seems to allow his aesthetics to come into its own.[39]

III Conclusion

The *Münchener Rede*, *Freiheitsschrift*, and the *Weltalter* transform and enrich our understanding of Schelling's aesthetics. Perhaps this should not be surprising given that his philosophy undergoes a dramatic transformation resulting from his new view of freedom as the choice between good and evil. And yet the tendency has been to presume that Schelling simply loses his philosophical interest in beauty and art. As I have tried to show, however, beauty is not only integrated into the new metaphysics, but also plays a central role in the story of divine and human freedom. The perception of beauty, after all, is the perception of nature in its perfect and original form, whose principles have achieved, through self-sacrifice, the requisite and dynamic hierarchy. Kant's *Religion* helps us to understand the hierarchy in ethical terms, as the free submission of nature to the ideal or universal. Schelling then places freedom at the heart of his metaphysical

existence of natural beauty that follows our judgment of taste (KU, §42, Kant AA 05: 300) or to what Kant views as the lack of a "purpose" in the otherwise purposive play of the faculties (KU, §§10–17, Kant AA 05: 219–37). With respect to the former, the intellectual interest that we take in the existence of natural beauty can be called "free," according to Kant, because there is no personal "end" that the beautiful fulfills for us in its existence. This is arguably Schelling's concern at this stage in his cosmology as well: the desire for existence is no longer a desperate and selfish striving, but a self-less desire to be the basis for the essence. Or, with respect to the latter, Schelling may describe eternal nature's desire as "free" because, insofar as it is in a state of play with itself, it is seemingly aimed at the production of images for the sake of their being brought to life; but this is not its expressed aim in the activity. Indeed, though the activity is arguably purposive for the end of creation, the only end the activity possesses is itself, i.e., its own activity of play.

[39] Even as Schelling seems to be drawing on Kant's theory of the harmony of the faculties and of aesthetic ideas, his account of our attraction to beauty takes a step beyond Kant, for whom attraction to the object of beauty is not central to aesthetic experience per se.

"system." Beauty is thus called upon to confirm "the dearest and ultimate hopes of humans," the belief "in the general capacity of matter again to be elevated into spiritual qualities" (SW 8: 284–5; Schelling 2000: 62).[40] By allowing us insight into the past that was never a present – the free act of divine creation – beauty purportedly gives us reason to hope that our own nature is capable of submitting to our practical ideals and that virtue and the construction of a loving community are within our grasp. Just like the Kant of the *Religion* who draws the disturbing conclusion that we are all evil, there is urgency in Schelling's appeal to beauty, as he desperately seeks signs of our capacity to overcome ourselves.

[40] McGrath 2010 rightly points out a weakness in Žižek's Lacanian reading of Schelling, according to which "The dialectic of consciousness and unconsciousness is not the production of love but a defense against horror and meaninglessness" (82). This imposes "a theory of repression onto the Schellingian unconscious or real principle. Nowhere does Schelling say that the unconscious is constituted by acts, content, experience, which are unconscious because subjectivity could not bear them ... Schelling and the romantics constructed the unconscious in order to overcome the modern split between subjectivity and nature, mind and body" (85).

CHAPTER 9

Nature and freedom in Schelling and Adorno

Andrew Bowie

I Locating freedom

Philosophical debate about freedom has begun to move away in some areas from the analytical concentration on the problem of how to "locate" freedom in a natural world governed by universal determinism. Recent work on Hegel by Terry Pinkard, Robert Pippin, and others, has, for example, considered freedom as self-legislation in terms of norms generated by the community in which the agent is located.[1] The importance of this perspective lies in its questioning of conceptions which work in terms of whether or not there is a special capacity in the subject, of the kind Kant referred to as a "causality through freedom." The problem with views – summed up in the question of whether one "could have done otherwise" – which seek to make freedom some kind of special internal attribute of rational beings, is that they come down to seeing freedom as dependent on an on-off switch inside the subject. If we have free will, something completely independent of natural causality is supposed to be able to decide whether the switch is pressed or not. However, if we are not free, the switching is presumably done by the brain qua causal mechanism. This, though, repeats the same problem at a different level: what makes the brain *decide* to do what the brain decides to do? The question is really what makes it intelligible that something is "deciding" at all, which entails that there must be some way in which what is done has a meaning beyond the merely mechanical appearance of either x or not-x. Such meaning is constituted in intersubjective social space in which things come to matter, which takes the issue beyond the internal make-up of both the brain and the subject. Even saying that decisions are actually illusory, because they depend completely on causal processes, still leaves one with the task of understanding *what* it is that is illusory, in contrast to the reality of the

[1] See, in particular, the outstanding Pippin 2008.

causal chain. As Adorno suggests: "in the situation of a complete determinism with no gaps, criteria of good and evil would be just completely meaningless, you couldn't even ask about them."[2] These issues also raise the related question of how the brain "does" anything, given that doing is a social category, not an observable or inferable natural phenomenon.

Attempts to explain what freedom is in terms of what happens inside the subject, be it as brain event or as mental "event,"[3] or whatever, fail in Hegelian terms to look at the context and content of the notional exercise of "freedom," freedom not being something that can be understood as an attribute of an isolated single subject. Both Kantian and reductive naturalist options tend to work with the notion that nature, in Kant's "formal" sense, is that which is subject to necessary laws. For Kant, there is then something wholly different from nature in this sense, which is not subject to any laws apart from the ones it gives to itself, based on the categorical imperative. This attempt to escape from iron determinism is, however, bought at the expense of a questionable account of human action. The identification of uncontaminated self-legislation raises a whole series of problems, because the subject's sense of self-legislation can involve self-deception, and an external observer has no access to the notional internal evidence.[4]

The Hegelian position can be seen in certain respects as an attempt to make more sense of the idea of self-legislation, while getting away from its tendency to render freedom abstract, via the failure to deal adequately with how the subject in fact determines itself in concrete circumstances. In Hegelian terms, if the norms via which the subject determines itself are what constitute it as itself – by its realizing that it can take a stance on the norms it adopts as its own – self-determination gains a content which connects it to the world of nature and society. This approach is already more enlightening than the arid attempts to determine at a metaphysical level whether there is "free will" or not, of the kind that make people excited over the possibility of a definitive answer to the question that is supposedly given when, for example, brain events appear to precede the

[2] Adorno 1996: 218.

[3] It has never been clear to me that talk of "mental events" is unproblematic, given the general difficulty of understanding the notion of an "event." Is everything of which I am conscious a "mental event"?

[4] Kant admits in the *Groundwork* that it may be that we never actually perform an action which is free in the sense of morally self-determined, because self-deception about one's motives is a perennial possibility. As I suggest below, the *Critique of Judgement* takes one beyond the extreme version of the nature–freedom split because it looks beyond the formal sense of "nature."

subject's awareness of making a decision. The problem in many versions of the free-will debate can be easily suggested. What ensues for me if someone purports definitively to argue to me that I actually do not possess "free will"? Would my essential relationship to my actions and stances towards the world be altered? The very fact that I can respond to the supposed definitive argument by adopting a critical or an affirmative stance toward it, or by drawing consequences from it, already has more to do with an account of freedom than the argument itself. In the Hegelian perspective, the idea that one's adoption of norms and the exercise of one's will must be made compatible with the fact that we are part of a causally closed universe still comes within the normative domain, as arguments about the role of natural causality in apparently self-determined action must themselves be justified in the same way as any other argument, so *Geist* remains prior and decisive. The question that interests me here with respect to Schelling and Adorno is whether this approach, which has a great deal to be said for it, deals fully with how one is to think about the relationship between "nature" and "freedom."[5]

II Naturalism?

The reason Schelling and Adorno are significant in this context is that they don't see freedom as something that essentially separates us from a nature conceived of as a deterministic system, and this means that they offer different ways of thinking about the notion of nature. It should already be apparent that I am not interested here in reductive naturalist arguments: they seem to me to rely on the ungrounded metaphysical assumption that everything must be explained in terms of causal laws, when the issue of freedom is in certain key respects, as Adorno will argue, an empirical and historical one. The real question is what does a nature in which freedom plays an ineliminable role look like, if one does not rely on appeals to something ultimately mysterious "in nature" that escapes the clutches of universal determinism? The answer, as we shall see, cannot be any kind of definitive version of how freedom and nature are to be located in an overall philosophical picture. In this sense there is no point in starting with a precise conceptual characterization of either term, in the manner of an analysis of freedom, and this already suggests ways

[5] I have dealt with these issues in more detail in Bowie 2013, where the emphasis is predominantly on Adorno.

beyond the problem of "defining" something that in one sense precisely depends on its not being definable.

One way of getting a handle on what is really at issue here is to ask the "Nietzschean" question of what the value of "freedom" can be. If universal determinism is true, why does that matter? It could basically only matter if the alternative were something that is threatened with being merely illusory, but that situation itself already takes one beyond what can be described in purely deterministic terms. Schelling and Adorno are clear that the essential point of freedom can only be grasped if it is seen in relation to what opposes it. This might seem just like a rerun of the free-will/determinism issue, in that freedom would be simply that which is not subject to necessary laws, but that would be mistaken. The issue here is prior to that issue, insofar as it involves asking why one should be bothered about freedom at all. After all, it is clear that in many circumstances human beings tend to acquiesce in lack of freedom, whether because it is easier and more comfortable to do so, or because the dangers involved in seeking freedom make acquiescence seem preferable.

This observation, in turn, might appear to suggest that I am simply conflating the metaphysical question of freedom of the will with the question of political freedom. However, part of what becomes apparent in Schelling and Adorno is that a straightforward conceptual separation of the various notions of freedom may actually obscure ways of understanding the significance of freedom. The basic point which they share is that freedom has to be seen dialectically, in relation to what opposes it, and this means that attempting to define the essential nature of freedom will obscure how its sense differs at different historical times, depending on the nature of the relationship between the free and the not-free. As Adorno points out, modern philosophical notions of freedom only really emerge when Locke starts thinking about nature in terms of universal determinism, and this change is linked to the contradictions that emerge from the beginning of the end of feudalism and the rise of bourgeois individualism: the "concept of the will itself ... as concept of the alternative: freedom or unfreedom of the will, only belongs to a relatively late phase of philosophical reflection."[6] Importantly, something analogous applies to the notion of nature in modernity, which comes to be seen, for example, both as a positive resource that can help free us of the pressures of modern social developments, and as that from which modern forms of self-determination allow us to emancipate ourselves. The broader point here is

[6] Adorno 2001: 267.

that Schelling's and Adorno's reflections on freedom and nature become part of a reappraisal of what philosophy itself should seek to achieve that is still not widely appreciated in much contemporary philosophical debate, where the norm largely remains the production of arguments for theories that define the real nature of the object of the theory.

III Schelling's alternative

Axel Hutter has very effectively summarized the dilemma with respect to modern conceptions of freedom in relation to Schelling's alternative conception:

> Freedom understood as a principle always tends either to be pure caprice [*Willkür*] (but then it is contingent in the sense of decisionism), or it actually once again obeys a law which cannot be doubted (but then it is only another necessity). Freedom conceived of as liberation can escape this consequence because it is not determined from out of itself, as Schelling very clearly formulates it: "the reality of a liberation directs or determines itself according to the reality of that from which it liberates itself." (SW 11.4: 20)[7]

The dialectical model here is crucial to understanding how both Schelling and Adorno arrive at a conception of a "dialectic of Enlightenment," and it occurs in a variety of ways in their work. Schelling speculates, for example, on the idea of nature being constituted by expansive and contractive forces (which Schelling sometimes sees in terms of light and gravity). Pure expansion would mean a universe that simply dissipates itself, pure contraction would mean an immobile, unarticulated, self-enclosed universe. Reality therefore emerges from the interaction of expansive and contractive forces. Applied to the issue of freedom, this kind of model results in what Hutter refers to: pure freedom as a principle leads to freedom losing its point, because if choice is arbitrary and contingent, it dissipates itself for lack of anything to anchor it; freedom as the wholesale acceptance of the governing of choice by necessity, on the other hand, leaves no space for things to change and develop in ways not governed by existing norms or known natural laws. In both versions of the dialectical model the idea is to get away from the notion of philosophy's job as being to establish a definitive metaphysical picture of how things are. Instead the aim is to seek to understand the nature of change in a manner that does not, as

[7] Hutter 1996: 105. Translations from German are my own.

Hegel arguably does, try to explicate a definitive logic of change, as the world's self-mediation, that would be prior to the concrete, contingent historical manifestation of change.[8]

Significantly, what is at issue here can be explained in relation to art, which plays a central role in the thinking of both Schelling and Adorno. One of the reasons for the interest in Greek tragedy in German Idealism is that tragedy, as a cultural response to the most extreme negative aspects of human life, creates forms of meaning that make some sense of what is apparently senseless. In the modern period, something analogous takes place in music. A feature of the music that begins to develop around the time of the emergence of German Idealism and Romanticism is the incorporation of more complex individual engagement with loss, mortality, and suffering than is present in the music that precedes it.[9] The power of Beethoven's most expressive music, like the late quartets, symphonies like Bruckner's Eighth and Ninth or Mahler's Sixth and Ninth, and the most profound works of Schubert, is precisely a result of their resistance to the negativity which is the ground of what they are expressing. Without that ground, the tensions and resolutions that enable music to articulate resistance to what threatens to destroy meaning would have no force.

Freedom in the sense of that which takes us wholly beyond this ground is a mere illusion, an omnipotence fantasy, whereas the capacity to respond in new and individual ways to what threatens our being even while it is also a necessary part of it, without pretending it can finally be obviated, means that freedom is both dependent on the ground and yet able temporarily to transcend it. The dialectic of Enlightenment results when freedom in modernity becomes the attempt to escape from or overcome the ground, rather than becoming aware of the need to come to terms with the limits of what human freedom, qua liberation from the ground, can achieve. The reflections that lead Schelling and Adorno in this direction are complex and often problematic, but the example of music just cited offers a way of understanding what is at issue. If the music were merely an expression of the negativity that often underlies it, it would simply duplicate that

[8] The conceptions of Žižek and others which seek to get away from this image of Hegel have some basis in a philosophical reconsideration of the conceptual moves in Hegel's philosophy, but they sometimes take too little account of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Hegel's philosophy. If Hegel intended to say what these interpretations contend, Schelling's objections would be harder to comprehend. This does not mean that a philosophical engagement with Hegel's work might not offer perspectives beyond what it seems the historical Hegel meant.

[9] Music prior to this period often retains theological elements which change the nature of the negativity expressed. There are exceptions, like the music of John Dowland, though such music does not have the connection to a wider image of the world that develops with Beethoven.

negativity in another symbolic register. It is the way in which the music takes us beyond the negativity in which it is grounded, without seeking just to escape from it, that is essential to understanding how freedom relates to nature in Schelling and Adorno.

Schelling arrives at his most significant reflections on freedom and nature, which begin with the essay *On the Essence of Human Freedom* of 1809, because he comes to reject attempts, of the kind that are present in the Spinozistic aspects of his *Naturphilosophie*, to reconcile freedom with natural and historical necessity, as part of a totality whose meaning can be understood in a philosophical system.[10] The freedom essay still hangs on to aspects of the attempt at such reconciliation, and implausibly seeks to sustain the idea that because the individual's will is independent of mechanical causality it, as Kant argued, exists outside of space and time. This means that a person's "intelligible character," which leads them to be good or evil, is given with their very existence. As he puts it in the *Weltalter*, nobody "has chosen their character; and yet this does not stop anybody attributing the action which follows from this character to themself as a free action" (Schelling 1946: 93). In this view, children can have a "tendency to evil" (SW 1.7: 386) based on some bizarre essential decision outside the realm of causality even before they are morally aware. This essentialization of the idea of someone's character makes no sense in the light of modern psychology and the growing awareness, central to Adorno, of how social causality plays a decisive role in people's moral and psychological development.

The still defensible aspects of the freedom essay result rather from the way in which it makes connections between freedom and *meaning* that take one beyond the narrow semantic conceptions of meaning that dominate too much philosophy today. This dimension leads to the later Schelling's increasingly thoroughgoing historicization of philosophy, which is based on the idea that a philosophy that relies on the explanation of things that are understood in terms of necessity – be that the necessity of natural laws or of logical laws – fails to come to terms with the reality of what could be otherwise, which is the object of historical understanding and which thereby involves freedom. The key to this conception is the notion of "will," "primal being" in the terms of the freedom essay, which is the ground of anything moving, changing, and becoming significant at all. As Markus Gabriel puts it: "That anything whatsoever is, that is, that there is anything determinate, that being in the sense of determinacy *is*, is wholly

[10] See Bowie 1993.

groundless, resultant of a transition Schelling coins [*sic*: the meaning is "for which Schelling coins the term"] 'willing.'"[11] Our understanding of this groundlessness is accessible via the experience of making life-changing decisions, where the ultimate reasons for what we do may never be fully transparent to us. Just saying that there is a causal explanation of why I arrive at my decision fails to explain the meaning for me and the investment involved in that decision, which make no sense if they are reduced to its causal aspects. If the decision were wholly transparent in cognitive terms, the meaning that results from "will" would be dissolved into a world where contingency and freedom are just necessity that has yet to be cognitively explained, the world that Schelling sees as present in Spinoza.

What is at issue here is a question about the orientation of philosophy that has implications for the contemporary debate about naturalism. In its bluntest form, the question that arises with regard to extreme versions of naturalism is why the attempt is made at all to reduce the world of human life that confronts issues of love, death, meaninglessness, trauma, and so on, to what can be reduced to causal laws. Though these may give a description of what is happening at the physical level throughout nature, including the human organism, it is impossible to get from this description to an account of the motivation, let alone the content, of such a philosophical inquiry. The extreme naturalist version of the inquiry is generated by a complex series of natural and historical developments that cannot be definitively shown to entail any logical or nomological necessity: the existence of many competing versions of such inquiry make this clear. Why should the most fundamental conception of the world be one that is based on what can be seen in mechanical terms, when the meanings of the world people actually inhabit involve ways of making sense that become incomprehensible if they are reduced to their physical substrate? How does the concern with making sense, including making sense in scientific terms, arise at all, if the world is really just a causal nexus? If freedom is an issue at all, it is clearly connected to forms of sense-making, and these cannot be reduced to a nomological account of sense-making, as such an account itself depends on a certain prior direction of sense-making that cannot be grounded in its own terms without the sense dissolving.

What is at stake here is apparent in Schelling's focusing his attention on the link between freedom and evil. He makes the problem with reductionism clear: "if . . . necessary and free are declared to be One, which means:

[11] Gabriel 2011: 92.

the same thing (in the last instance) which is the essence of the moral world is also the essence of nature, then this is understood as follows: the free is nothing but natural power, a spring which, like all others, is subordinated to the mechanism" (SW 1.7: 342). What is termed evil in such views will be just the result of the promptings of causally governed natural urges, which means the idea of evil has no content:

> This idea is a natural consequence of the doctrine according to which freedom consists just in the rule of the intelligible principle over sensuous desires and inclinations, and the good comes from pure reason, so that it is clear that there is no freedom for evil (because sensuous inclinations predominate here); but to put it more correctly, evil is completely negated. (SW 1.7: 345)

It is precisely at the point where reason ceases to be seen just as that which controls "evil" natural impulses that it both ceases to be simply opposed to "nature" and is able to be mobilized in destructive or perverted ways. Rather than evil being some kind of pure negative principle, it is an inherent part of the way in which our thinking and action can impose themselves on the objective world, because they are part of that world. The dialectic of Enlightenment implied here derives from the fact that we cannot escape the need for such imposition, in which we oppose ourselves to some aspect of being in the name of self-preservation or the fulfillment of desire, but that such imposition can seek to become total and so to usurp the place of "God."

Now the question of Schelling's relationship to theology is immensely complicated (and he ultimately fails to articulate the "philosophical religion" he intends), so I just want to focus here on the issue of the relationship between "ground" and "existence," insofar as it offers ways of thinking about freedom that will be echoed in certain respects in Adorno, and so relates to some contemporary concerns. In his groundbreaking essay on the freedom essay, Gabriel has offered an interpretation that makes the core issue apparent:

> "God" is thus in Schelling the name for the objectively-idealist unity of thinking and being. There is therefore a system in God (the structure of the world). His being does not, however, exhaust itself in being a system, because there is also a ground in Him (His substance) which opposes the will to system. "God" is Schelling's name for the world insofar as it thinks and lives. "God is spirit."[12]

[12] Gabriel 2006: 38.

The opposition between ground and system/existence is what makes ontology into a historical issue. The underlying point is that, whatever the laws are that constitute the system of nature, what those laws mean and how they constitute the world cannot be explained in their own terms. The key notion here is therefore that of the "world," which cannot be seen as the timeless sum of natural laws, and is inherently historical, insofar as it cannot be understood just in terms of nature qua law-bound system. Intelligibility must already occur in ways that cannot be causally explained for causal explanation to make any sense at all: how would one arrive in a causally determined manner at the idea of judging that the reasons for things are to be understood in causal terms? The idea of will as primal being implies that for such investigation to take place at all, it must be motivated by something that is not explained by the investigation itself. This idea does not involve reducing validation to genesis: it just insists that the activity of validating a claim in causal terms cannot explain its own emergence. As Schelling insists, reason is groundless, in that it cannot explain the fact of its own existence. In short, we cannot give a definitive reason why reason exists, and this is what links it to the dilemmas involved in freedom.

In a largely Heideggerian vein, Gabriel talks in this respect of "fields of sense" and kinds of "logical space," space in which things come to be as something intelligible and so capable of becoming determinate: these spaces develop and change and cannot be circumscribed by a philosophical account, as such an account depends on them. Our action takes place in such spaces that do not come about through rational processes, but rather through the contingent realities of history: within such spaces there will often be rules of rational deliberation, but they are also subject to the contingency of their emergence. This kind of conception is opposed to a "metaphysics of presence," for which the true world somehow exists before it becomes manifest in its truth, such that reason consists in gaining contact with that preexisting truth. The tension between ground and existence is echoed in Heidegger's idea that being inherently involves hiddenness, withdrawal, which means that the world is what emerges through "unhiddenness," rather than being a preexisting totality that is all potentially available in any circumstances.[13]

[13] See, above all, Wrathall 2011.

IV Nature and rationality

Such conceptions are regarded with suspicion in many areas of philosophy, but they are present in areas that are often not regarded with such suspicion, such as the work of John Dewey. Dewey suggests that the dualisms that obsess modern philosophy

> have a single origin in the dogma which denies temporal quality to reality as such. Such a theory is bound to regard things which are causally explanatory as superior to results and outcomes; for the temporal dependence of the latter cannot be disguised, while "causes" can be plausibly converted into independent beings, or laws, or other non-temporal forms.[14]

Investigation of nature is inherently temporal, and it is a mistake to assume that the result of the inquiry "is already there in fully fledged being and that we just run across it . . . That there is existence antecedent to search and discovery is of course admitted; but it is denied that as such, as other than the conclusion of the historical event of inquiry in its connection to other histories, it is already the object of knowledge."[15] In consequence: "In some degree, every genuine discovery creates some transformation of both the meanings and the existences of nature."[16] It is this transformation of the meanings and existences of nature that Schelling sees in terms of ground and existence, and that is the basis of his and Adorno's reflections on nature and freedom.

Schelling is rightly seen as belonging to what develops into the modern move against the very idea of metaphysics as the account of the ultimate nature of what there is. Heidegger, Adorno, and others see metaphysics in this sense as revealing itself in modernity to be the domination of being by the subject, whose main manifestation is the drive towards complete technological control. A.W. Moore has recently offered a useful version of how to construe "metaphysics," which allows for such a critical perspective, while not surrendering what Adorno in particular sees as an impulse that cannot be eliminated from thought, namely the impulse to transcend the given. Moore praises post-Kantian thinkers, like Hegel, for bringing "a due regard, not only for the things, and not only for the things together with the sense made of them, but for the making of that sense. Metaphysics in the early modern period had a distinctive kind of self-consciousness that [contemporary analytical] naturalistic metaphysics

[14] Dewey 1958: 149. [15] Dewey 1958: 156. [16] Dewey 1958: 157.

lacks."[17] It is not least the presence of this self-consciousness that has led to the revival of interest in German idealism.

However, the focus of this revival has been mainly on Hegel, and, to a lesser extent, Fichte. It is precisely the implications of the question of nature that seem to have so far prevented a mainstream reception of Schelling comparable to that of Hegel. One reason for this is summarized in Pippin's claim that with Hegel one "leaves nature behind," because appeals to nature inherently involve a dogmatism that fails to see that talk of nature depends on the space of reasons. What we think nature is has to be legitimated, rather than nature itself being used as a legitimation in the manner it was in feudalism, for example, via the use of teleological justifications. If the subject's self-determination is supposed to have a prior source, it faces the problem that: "Except insofar as such a 'source' or 'origin' or [Heideggerian] finitude is self-consciously determined as such, it is nothing; it is the 'night in which all cows are black.'"[18] The early Schelling's determination of nature as essentially the productive ground of the "products" that are appearing nature may be susceptible to this criticism. However, the dialectical tension between ground and existence seems to me to open up space for a non-dogmatic understanding of "nature" and its relationship to the subject, and thus to freedom. It is precisely in the relationship between self-determined reason and its "other" that ways of thinking about nature that do not fall prey to dogmatism emerge.

Adorno suggests how when he talks of the way in which human reason can become as threatening as uncontrolled nature. Uncontrolled domination by instrumental reason results in disasters that nature could not produce, but that are a magnification of the kind of destruction that the desire to control nature was supposed to avoid. My problem with the recent Hegelian approaches to freedom as self-determination is that they so rarely confront head-on why undoubted advances of rationality in modernity go hand in hand with regressions to barbarism which would not be possible without the employment of rational norms: what Adorno sees in terms of Auschwitz as the culmination of a dialectic of Enlightenment. The model shared in key respects by Schelling and Adorno has been excellently characterized by Hutter in the following remark with respect to Schelling's critique of modern philosophy since Descartes:

[17] Moore 2012: 342. [18] Pippin 1997: 405.

> Schelling's critique wants however to lay bare the decisive state of affairs for modern history, that the modern impulse for emancipation has turned into its opposite in being carried out concretely in history. Modern thought falls prey, after it has emancipated itself from external attachment to the authority of revelation, which it does completely justifiably, to another power: the "nature" of its cognitive capacity, which it now obeys more blindly than it previously obeyed external authorities.[19]

It is important to stress here, as Hutter does, that what Schelling seeks (like Adorno) is not some kind of originary alternative to reason, of the kind suggested by Nietzsche's more questionable versions of the idea of the "will to power," but a further self-critical turn. This takes in what is implied in the ground–existence relationship, namely the idea that because reason cannot be self-grounding it must incorporate a sense of its historicity, as something that emerges with all the other aspects of subjectivity, including what Schelling terms the "dark ground which must nevertheless be the ground of cognition" (SW 1.7: 413).

In the contemporary landscape, the widespread tendency toward scientism is a manifestation of what is being criticized here. The failure to see that an exclusive reliance for understanding the world and ourselves as part of it on what can be subsumed under natural laws cannot itself provide an account of its own legitimacy, let alone keep the space open for reflection on the potentially damaging consequences of such a stance, suggests why Schelling's reflections are finding a growing resonance in contemporary discussion. In a Schellingian perspective, the history of how scientistic conceptions arose is philosophically as significant as the arguments supposedly supporting the conceptions. The freedom that Schelling sees as inseparable from philosophy is the potential to see how what may seem based on logical or conceptual necessity can come to be revealed as what we need to emancipate ourselves from. Schelling's account of the development of modern philosophy, where the basis of his stance is presented, is well summarized in the following from the *Presentation of the Purely Rational Philosophy* of between 1847 and 1852:

> Reason was subordinated to an alien law in mythological religion, just as it is in the belief in revelation as merely external authority, which is undeniably what the Reformation degenerated into in the end. But it is no less unfree when it follows uncomprehended natural cognition, and it is a necessary advance that it also set itself free from this. (SW 11.1: 266)

[19] Hutter 1996: 300.

It might now seem as though the notion of nature is being used in such a loose way that a clear idea of the freedom–nature relationship is impossible. Nature is in one sense what is opposed to reason, otherwise there would be no need for reason to comprehend "natural cognition." At the same time, if reason is wholly other to nature it is, for Schelling, Negative Philosophy, philosophy that does not get to the point of understanding that thought is based on a ground that transcends what can be articulated in a system, because it is the condition of the impulse to generate intelligibility at all in the first place.

The core idea here is that, as was already suggested, nature has to be understood dialectically: what it is depends on its other, "reason," which, in turn, is what it is in relation to "nature." These relationships are not static, and, as the remarks from Schelling just cited and Adorno's idea of how reason can become a threat like "first nature" suggest, each can become what was the other in differing historical circumstances. This approach can be further clarified in terms of the following distinction that Albrecht Wellmer has explicated in an outstanding essay. On the one hand, nature can, of course, justifiably be taken as Kant's "lawfulness of appearances in space and time," but – and here the conceptions of Schelling and Adorno are decisive – "The nature which we, as acting and deliberating creatures, are *aware of* as our own nature – the nature Adorno speaks of – is not the nature of scientifically objectified brain processes, but the living nature of our body with its neediness, its impulses, its potentials and its vulnerability."[20] One could add that we are also aware, as Kant realized in the *Critique of Judgement*, of non-human nature, in the sense of the "natural world" of landscape, flora, and fauna, as a source of meaning and motivation, as well as being a perennial threat to our existence. Crucially, this latter sense only properly emerges as a consequence of what Schelling talks of in terms of the liberation from revelation as external authority. It is only in the eighteenth century that nature becomes a value for its own sake, rather than an expression of the divinity, and the sense of what Kant describes in terms of the "sublime" develops.

What is most important here is that responses to the second sense of nature necessarily take one beyond cognitive apprehension, especially apprehension in nomological terms, which is one aspect of what Schelling means by "natural cognition." We don't always deal with needs and

[20] Wellmer 2009: 220. I have given the page numbers of the translation, but have myself translated most of the quoted passages from a manuscript kindly provided by the author (Wellmer, Albrecht, " 'Bald frei, bald unfrei' – Reflexionen über die Natur im Geist").

impulses, or with the meanings we gain from involvement in the natural world, just by knowing about the needs and about why something seems beautiful, overwhelming, senseless, etc. Instead we may act expressively, seeking to make sense in ways which cognitive command of what is at issue cannot. Peter Dews has referred to the "limits of [Weberian] disenchantment," and it is in such areas that we realize that explanation and knowledge, which are the source of disenchantment, are not the sole ways in which we respond to the world and create sense. The critical point of the idea of a dialectic of Enlightenment is not to invalidate good science, but to be aware of the dangers of seeking to make nomological accounts the sole arbiters of our relations to the world. The beginnings of an awareness of this danger are what Schelling articulates in his account of evil in the freedom essay, when he warns against the desire of human will for total control.

V Nature-history

The attempt to explain the sense expressive forms make in cognitive terms (of the kind encountered, for example, in evolutionary accounts of aesthetics) tries to reduce ground to system, when, as I suggested above with respect to music, it is precisely the tension between the two which makes the sense particular to significant aesthetic forms. The most important modern art does not correspond to some (anyway mythical) norm generated via evolutionary advantage, but arises precisely through a constant impulse to move beyond what may cease to make new sense once it is assimilated into the normatively acceptable. This kind of generation of new sense is linked to the understanding of freedom, and is inseparable from the ways in which nature changes its status, in what Adorno refers to as "nature-history." Wellmer again:

> It seems that we cannot reconstruct the history of nature, part of which is the emergence of human forms of life and of the spheres of subjective and objective spirit, in terms of a nomological physical theory, precisely because to describe what is essentially *new* in the process of evolution we need categories beyond those of physics and not reducible to them.[21]

These categories suggest that the metaphysical realist version of the formal conception of nature is actually a dogmatic myth which claims to know what nature is "in the last analysis." Because what we know nature to be

[21] Wellmer 2009: 222.

changes with history, the claim to know what it ultimately is cannot be validated, as Dewey's remarks cited above already implied.

The early Schelling sought, in the *System of Transcendental Idealism*, to show that art was the "organ of philosophy," which was able to reconcile necessity and freedom, unconscious and conscious productivity. His move away from this position goes along with his growing suspicion of the philosophical attempt to dissolve ground into system, as he comes to think Hegel does. However, if one does not see art wholly in terms of reconciliation, but as still involving a dialectic of necessity and freedom, aspects of Schelling's ideas on art can be seen to remain significant for the reasons suggested above.[22] In the very different historical situation that Adorno confronts, art still plays a decisive role in relation to the philosophical question of freedom and nature, and Adorno's best reflections offer ways of bringing some of Schelling's reflections into contemporary debate.

The obvious link to Schelling is evident in Adorno's apparently paradoxical claim in the lectures on *Problems of Moral Philosophy*, that "We are really no longer ourselves a piece of nature at the moment when we notice, when we recognise, that we are a piece of nature,"[23] so that "What transcends nature is nature that has become aware of itself."[24] The question is what kind of awareness this should be, in order that we can avoid our reason becoming as destructive as wild nature can be. For Schelling, it was not the fact that we have a naturally driven basis that was the source of evil, it was rather that this driven basis can become the core of subjectivity itself: "Evil does not come from finitude in itself, but from finitude which has been raised to being-self" (SW 1.7: 370). In the *Stuttgart Private Lectures*, Schelling contends that "Evil is in a certain respect completely spiritual [*das reinste Geistige*], for it carries on the most emphatic war against all *being*, indeed it would like to negate [*aufheben*] the ground of creation" (SW 1.7: 468). The idea is neatly encapsulated in his remark that "Fr. Baader rightly says it would be good if the depravity of mankind only went as far as becoming animal; unfortunately, though, mankind can only stand below or above the animal" (SW 1.7: 373). What makes us stand below or above is, in one sense, identical. In this respect philosophical reflection for both Schelling and Adorno aims at avoiding the consequences of the urge to domination which ensues from subjectivity's drive to assert itself. Adorno sees this in terms of instrumental reason which becomes a threat in the manner of first nature, via its potential for exclusive orientation towards control of the other. The point is that such an

[22] See Bowie 2003, 2010. [23] Adorno 1996: 154. [24] Adorno 1996: 155.

orientation is grounded in a natural drive, but can only come into existence through reason being turned in a perverted direction. It is in this sense that reason necessarily contains its own opposite within itself that seems to be underestimated in the Hegelian view of freedom as self-legislation according to norms. The traumatic experiences of modern history that are Adorno's point of orientation demand an account of how it is that when science and technology can make the world more humane, the actual direction of the modern world is often toward forms of barbarism that are made possible by technological advance. Clearly, an answer to this question demands intensive empirical research that a philosophical model does not provide. So what do Adorno's reflections tell us about the nature–freedom relationship with respect to contemporary debate?

A vital aspect of the significance of art for Adorno, which is only fully apparent in his lectures on aesthetics[25] – which give a very much larger amount of space to the issue of nature than does *Aesthetic Theory* – is as a form that allows "nature" to "speak." His point is based on the idea that a conception of freedom, like Kant's, which involves excluding nature qua sensuous impulse from morality, involves a repression which excludes any possibility of our having a fulfilled existence as a form of nature of the kind characterized by Wellmer. What is the point of reason and freedom if they merely entail the renunciation of drives? As history tells us, such renunciation cannot be indefinitely sustained: accounts of the euphoria that greeted the outbreak of the First World War suggest something of what is at issue here. At the same time, it is clear that a merely impulse-led existence will equally lead to destructive consequences, of the kind that the civilizing process justifiably seeks to exclude.[26] It is this situation that leads to the apparently paradoxical status of nature suggested in the remark cited above: we need to find ways of being aware of the nature that we are that do not seek to rationalize it out of existence, either by seeking to reduce it to causal mechanisms, so making it amenable to increasing control, or by ignoring the need for non-cognitive forms of expression adequate to that nature as it is manifested in changing historical circumstances.

The fact that Adorno sees modern art – something thoroughly historical and constructed – as what can allow nature to speak illustrates the dialectic in play here. By revealing how social forms can become rigidified and have

[25] Adorno 1961, 1973, 2009. On these, see Bowie 2013: ch. 6.

[26] Freud's idea in *Civilization and its Discontents* that war is a product of the civilizing process suggests what Adorno is aiming at in his dialectic of nature and culture.

to be renewed if they are to be adequate responses to the tensions inherent in our impulse-driven nature, significant art makes a space for "nature" – for example by the employment of "mimetic" forms, such as gesture and tonal expression – which has been lost or repressed in the development of dominant cognitive and ethical social norms. The fact that resources derived from rationality are also required for this to happen is precisely the point: the same rationality that can rigidify into repressive mechanisms, so becoming "natural" in the negative sense of being apparently immutable in the manner of causal laws, is required for the release of natural potential that has been repressed, but can liberate us from such immutability. Adorno's espousal of certain kinds of modernism, especially in music, sometimes offers appropriate examples of what he means, but he often loads too much significance onto the esoteric side of such music as a refusal of reified musical forms.[27] A more obvious example of what Adorno sees as a dialectic of mimesis and rationality can be found in the history of jazz improvisation.[28] The enduring tension between the development of rule-bound technical resources and the demand for new expression that transcends or even ignores those resources when they become merely a convention suggests a dynamic picture of how we can become aware of our living nature, not as a specifiable quantity, but as something that is always in danger of being repressed or damaged. In such forms of sense-making, we become aware of something essential to the modern human condition, which cannot be exhaustively characterized in a philosophical account of the kind offered in the Hegelian idea of self-determination through norms.

The more controversial counter in Adorno to the Hegelian picture of normativity and freedom is explicitly derived from psychoanalysis, and again echoes Schelling's reflections on the ground of freedom.[29] Adorno refers to "*das Hinzutretende*," by which he means that which has to come additionally into play to impel us actually to act or adopt a norm of action in a difficult situation: in this sense it is groundless in the way we saw Schelling talking of "will" as the basis of being's determinacy. Adorno sees this additional element as "a somatic impulse, which goes beyond the intellectualization"[30] present in theories of the will like that of Kant, where the key is "giving the law to oneself." Given that it is a somatic impulse, it would seem to be "something merely determined,"[31] and thus counter to

[27] See Bowie 2007: ch. 9.
[28] Adorno, as is now almost universally accepted, was just wrong about serious jazz. See Bowie 2007 for the evidence that he began to change his mind about jazz in later life.
[29] On Schelling and psychoanalysis, see Bowie 2010.
[30] Adorno 2001: 317.
[31] Adorno 2001: 328.

any notion of freedom of the will. However, like Schelling, Adorno contends that the nature of the ground of something does not determine what it can become. He puts it in Freudian terms: the ego is "itself split-off libidinal energy which is used for testing reality."[32] Consequently, it cannot be wholly different from natural impulse, but is also not identical with it. When we "behave spontaneously in this real sense, then we are just as little blind nature as we are on the other hand repressed nature," and we are "capable, by dint of this impulse, of getting into, leaping into, going into the objective sphere which is otherwise obstructed for us by our own rationality."[33] The example of jazz improvisation outlined above offers one instance of what Adorno is aiming at: what is at issue are impulse-driven connections to the world that make sense, taking one beyond oneself at the same time as helping to constitute oneself in a renewed world of sense.

Adorno is, of course, best known for his reflections on how modernity destroys sense by subjecting the particularity of the world to increasing domination by general forms, from the commodity form, to bureaucratic standardization which can enable the administration of mass murder. There is, however, a hyperbolic side to this aspect of Adorno's thinking that seems to me likely to paralyze reflection on how to escape what he calls the "context of delusion." What is more important are the ways in which both Schelling and Adorno allow us to think about making sense and what motivates adherence to norms: it is this dimension that the Hegelian perspective fails adequately to illuminate. Pippin says that the core of his Hegelianism is the idea that "to live freely" is to lead a "life commonly and justifiably measured by some norm."[34] Although this involves the idea, which Adorno shares, that freedom of the single individual is a delusion if it entails the unfreedom of others, because that freedom is entangled with domination – with evil in Schelling's sense – Pippin's claim seems to me only to take in one side of the issue of freedom in modernity. Interestingly, in a fascinating recent interview, Pippin acknowledges part of the problem:

> At some point the Hegelian categories just run out, and then you get the Frankfurt School's account, and the accounts of structuralism, poststructuralism, Freudian or Lacanian psychoanalysis, all of them trying to get at what's going wrong in the basic, fundamental structure of human desire formation. Let's say that the problem is deeper than one Hegel could deal with.[35]

[32] Adorno 2001: 329. [33] Adorno 2001: 330. [34] Pippin 1997: 409. [35] Pippin 2011.

The stress on the irreducibility of normativity to reductive naturalism that characterizes contemporary Hegelianism undoubtedly adds a vital dimension to the debate on freedom. The dimension Pippin suggests is lacking is apparent in those thinkers, like Schelling and Adorno, who do not see art and its reflection in aesthetics as a kind of add-on to the real business of philosophy.

It is the contradictory nature of reflection on freedom in modernity that is essential here. The point in the following from Adorno is that we have to come to terms with how the development of norms is both inseparable from freedom and leaves a remainder which demands expression if it is not to become destructive:

> The more the I controls itself [*sich gebietet*]; and the more it controls nature, the more it learns to control itself, the more questionable its own freedom becomes to it, precisely insofar as it is this archaic, non-controlled reaction as something chaotic, so that . . . whilst it is only with the development of consciousness at all that something like freedom becomes possible, *at the same time* freedom is pushed back into this archaic-mimetic moment that is essential to it by the development of consciousness.[36]

However much philosophy and natural science illuminate the nature and functioning of consciousness and so emancipate us from myth and illusion, they must also take account of the fact, evident in the need for expressive forms of response to the nature of human existence, that cognitive command is not identical with emancipation. Our status as both part of nature and yet somehow separate from it that is the underlying idea shared by Schelling and Adorno means that freedom manifests itself in differing ways as human relationships to society and to the non-human world change. A lot of philosophy in recent years has paid too little attention to the historical exploration of the contradictions which emerge in attempting to understand the relationship between freedom and nature, seeking instead to answer a metaphysical question that excludes too many of the real issues. Schelling and Adorno cannot be said to deal adequately with all the dimensions of the questions involved here, but they do offer perspectives which may make future debate about nature and freedom more likely to influence progressive social and political change.

[36] Adorno 2001: 295.

CHAPTER 10

Church and state: Schelling's political philosophy of religion

Günter Zöller

> Je trouve cette différence entre les législateurs romains et ceux des autres peuples, que les premiers firent la religion pour l'État, et les autres, l'État pour la religion.[1]

The aim of this essay is to relate the traditional concern of philosophy, since Aristotle, with the political nature of the human being to the focus on religion that is to be found in German Idealism in general, and in the middle Schelling in particular.[2] The emphasis of the proposed reading rests on Schelling's prognosis and defense of an anti-cum-post-modern religious state that trumps politics with religious means and thereby risks realizing religion at the cost of right. The primary text for tracing the development of Schelling's political philosophy of religion is the *Stuttgart Private Lecture Course* from 1810. The four sections of the essay address, in turn, the modern rationalization of state and religion; the opposition between mechanics and organics in thinking about the state before Kant, in Kant, and in the early Schelling; the middle Schelling's redefinition of the relation between church and state in the context of the *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*; and the grounds and consequences of the middle Schelling's religious trumping of political law.

[1] Montesquieu 1716: 81.

[2] With their focus on the politico-theological thought of the middle Schelling, the following reflections aim at supplementing earlier work on Schelling's practical philosophy from the viewpoints of the philosophy of law, the philosophy of history, political philosophy, and philosophical theology with a primary focus on the later Schelling. See Habermas 1954, Sandkühler 1968, Marx 1977 and Pawlowski, Smid, and Specht 1989.

I State of reason and religion of reason

Over the past 500 years, the unity of political power and religious rule that originally emerged, with long-lasting world-historical consequences, in the early state organizations of the Middle and Near East some four and a half millennia ago has undergone comprehensive and thorough developments and transformations. Absolute rulers turned into heads of state restricted by law, omnipotent ecclesiastical princes were replaced by pastoral caretakers of the soul, and faithful subjects were transformed into voting citizens of a commonwealth ruled by a sovereign populace. But recent concepts and ideologies such as that of the secularization of modern society or, more recently, that of the return of religion only address partial and superficial aspects of the complex phenomenon of the factual and normative foundation of publically executed power and politically sanctioned force in the interrelated fields of politics and religion.

Recent developments in the relation between religion and politics belong to a large and long-lasting historical context stretching from the ancient theocratic states through the ingenious invention of the political – of city-state politics – in the Greek *poleis*, especially in fifth-century Athenian democracy. The relation between religion and politics developed further under the shape of the political cult of the state deities in the Roman republic and the twin unit of church and state in the Christian Middle Ages, along with its transformation in the theory and practice of the modern sovereign territorial state. The latter's constitutive principles, consisting in the division of political powers, popular sovereignty, and religious toleration, were established and advanced by humanism, renaissance, and reformation at the beginning of the modern era and by the Enlightenment and the bourgeois revolutions in North America and Western Europe at its end. Over the course of this multiform and long-term series of developments, the position of religion within the state and the relation of religion to the state underwent dramatic changes. Once a power outside and above the state, religion developed into an institution tamed and framed within the political order of the modern state. Unlike what the simplified understanding of modernity as secularization might suggest, the state, over the course of the modern period, not so much freed itself from religion, but placed itself in a new, radically different relation to religion. Religion served the modern state in that the latter used the forms and functions of the former in order to give to its own outward constraining means of preservation and manipulation the inner meaningfulness and intrinsic significance of a power transcending merely physical presence and efficacy.

If one takes a closer look at the theoreticians of the modern state – the radical utopians, the analytic realists, and the normative idealists from Thomas More and Campanella through Machiavelli and Hobbes along with Grotius and Spinoza to Locke and Rousseau – one will find in all of them, in addition to the founding of autonomous statehood, a political concern with religion and *cultus*. Hobbes completes the sovereign state, conceived on the model of divine omnipotence ("mortal God"), with a religious community ("Christian common-wealth") that includes the constitution of a state church.[3] Spinoza envisions, from a theologico-political perspective, a religious practice that assures obedience to the laws of the state.[4] Rousseau supplements civil society founded on a social contract with the outline of a civil religion [*religion civile*] intended to inculcate a republican mindset.[5] The common feature shared by these and other modern projects of a politically willed and politically shaped religious practice is the intent to render religion ethical and to make theology rational. Religion is to serve the ethical conditioning of the citizen; the theology correlated with it is to undertake the rational justification of political obedience by taking recourse to the existence and efficacy of a divine order that is both supra-natural and extra-political.

The coordinated rationalization and ethicalization of politics and religion is also evident in the German philosophy of the eighteenth century. The continuation of the ancient and medieval tradition of natural law [*ius naturale*] under conditions of modern Continental rationalism leads to the founding of positive law in the law of reason [*Vernunftrecht*], including the rationalistically conceived and construed state law [*ius publicum*] and law of the peoples [*ius gentium*], due to which political acting is subject to a supra-positive normativity. The endpoint of this development is marked by Kant's non-empirical doctrine of private and public law in the first part of his late elaborated moral philosophy, *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797).[6]

Parallel to this politico-juridical transformation, there occurs a philosophical naturalization of religion and theology, which, rather than relying on supra-natural revelation, seeks to ascertain the existence of the divine being on the basis of experience and by means of rational inferences. In this regard, too, the modern course of development continues earlier ideas about physical and natural theology [*theologia physica*, *theologia naturalis*]

[3] Hobbes 1651: 89, 199.
[4] Spinoza 1670: 572–99. On Spinoza's political restraining of religion, see Zöller 2012d.
[5] Rousseau 1762: 282–91, 158–64. On Rousseau's conception of a civil religion, see Zöller 2014b.
[6] On Kant's political philosophy of law in the context of modern European philosophy, see Zöller 2014a.

in order to employ the scientific cognition of nature for a generic belief in God (deism). Again, it is Kant who preserves religion and theology under the guise of rational religion and theology by morally restituting the belief in God and personal immortality through his doctrine of the postulates of pure practical reason in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788).[7] According to the critical Kant, religion is rational, and in particular compatible with pure practical reason, only if it presents autonomously validated moral laws as divine commands.[8]

Unlike his predecessors, who had aimed at a monism of reason that reduced cognition and volition to the same standards and structures of operation, Kant's parallel rationalization of law and politics, on the one hand, and religion and theology, on the other hand, affirmed the generic distinction between alternative kinds of rationality, in particular the specific difference between theoretical and practical reason, maintaining their specifically different modes of validity and validation. Most importantly, Kant insists on the principal difference between the failed attempts to justify moral and ethico-theological cognitions by the altogether insufficient means of theoretical reason, which are geared at the determination of objects, on the one hand, and the successful attempts to that effect based on practical reason, on the other hand. For Kant, the latter are sufficient for the determination of the will and capable of authorizing the belief in God from an ethico-theological perspective.[9]

Furthermore, Kant distinguishes, with regard to the generic principle of morality that holds for all finite rational beings ("categorical imperative"), between law and ethics as the two specifically different forms of a rationally sanctioned use of freedom.[10] While law regulates the external use of freedom in manifest actions, ethics, construed as a doctrine of virtue, restricts the internal use of freedom in the selection of subjective principles of action ("maxims").[11] More precisely, the external use of freedom is subject to legally sanctioned external constraint, while the inner use of freedom does not admit of external constraint and operates solely through inner or self-constraint in the guise of ethical self-mastery ("autocracy") and is geared to the volitional ends that assure the latter ("duties of virtue").[12]

[7] See Kant AA 05: 124–32. [8] On Kant's political philosophy of religion, see Zöller 2014b.
[9] On the rationality of faith in Kant, see Zöller 2013a.
[10] See Kant AA 06: 222f., 06: 225, 06: 218–21. [11] See Kant AA 06: 225.
[12] See Kant AA 06: 383, 06: 394f. On Kant's conception of ethical self-constraint and moral autocracy, see Zöller 2010a.

With this move, Kant has replaced the specifically moral (ethical) conditioning of law and politics by supra-positive law in the modern tradition of natural law with the generic moralization of law and politics by practical reason. Law and politics – hence the entire sphere of the state – are subject to the generic principle of morality, requiring universalizable maxims of willing and acting, while not being subject to the specifically ethical principle of morally motivated willing. As a result of this seismic shift in the relationship between law and ethics, the sphere of the state is marked by unconditional rational norms without the state as such being authorized to prescribe or even only investigate the ethical dispositions of its citizens. To be sure, Kant's strict distinction between the legal and the ethical form of the lawfully governed use of freedom does not exclude, and even encourages, the additional ethical sanction of originally purely juridico-political commands and prohibitions of social action.

II State mechanics and state organics

Kant undertook his groundbreaking adjustment of the relationship between law and ethics and between religion and morality in the twofold tradition of natural law and Enlightenment philosophy. He understood his critical innovations as part of the early modern advances over the prior preponderance of authoritarian politics and religious dogmatism. For the generation succeeding him in the history of philosophy, though, Kant no longer served as a backward link to the early modern period between Descartes and Hume, but as the starting point for further developments and transformations that made Kant's thinking as much the object of emphatic agreement as of radical critique. Above all, the *Junge Wilde* rejected the dualism that pervaded Kantian philosophy generally, and in its disciplinary areas – a dualism that methodically aimed at the articulation of distinction rather than the formation of unity and formally relocated unity from the dimension of origin to that of application and use.[13]

The primary objects of the post-Kantian meta-critique of reason were the dualism of sensibility and understanding and the dualism of theoretical and practical reason. In addition, the principal distinction between law and ethics and the philosophical preference of rational religion over revealed

[13] On Kant's conception of non-factual, pure origin as a source of a priori validity, see Zöller 2012a.

religion became core concerns of post-Kantian, German-idealist theorizing. In particular, there emerged in the productive reception and transformation of Kant a consensus, with regard to the politico-theological complex in general and the relation between the state and religion in particular, about the insufficiency of reducing the understanding of the state to the workings of legal rationality and of limiting the understanding of religion to the institution of rational faith and ethico-theology.

An early document of the consolidated meta-critique of the Kantian rationalist doctrines of the state and of religion was the text labeled by Franz Rosenzweig "The Oldest System Program of German Idealism."[14] Yet this document can be regarded neither as the oldest such program nor as a sketch of a complete system of philosophy.[15] Instead, the document, which comprises a mere two pages beginning with the last two words of a truncated sentence ("an ethics"), focuses on the thematic sequence "ethics – law – aesthetics – religion" emphasizing two main points, namely, the status of the state in human social relations and the aesthetic and political insufficiency of rational religion.

On the one hand, the system program fragment, which, while in Hegel's handwriting, shows the intellectual influence, if not the (co-) authorship of Hölderlin and Schelling, exposes the incompatibility of state and freedom by arguing that the state, due to its "mechanical" character and its nature as a "machine," degrades human beings subjected to its rule to mere "spinning wheels" [*Räderwerk*]. The condensed critique of the state results in a call for an end of the state, that is, for the state to "desist" [*aufhören*]. On the other hand, the system program fragment critiques the esoteric character of a religion based on pure reason as a one-sided "monotheism of reason" and calls for the latter's emendation by an aesthetic religion that is to be both sensual and artistic in the manner of a "polytheism of the imagination and of art." The fragment culminates in the demand for a "new mythology," to be based on a reason that has its ideas executed in the medium of art and in the mode of sensibility, in short, in a "mythology of reason."

In later years, the putative heads behind the ethico-aesthetico-theological system program fragment, each in their own way, further developed the youthful critique of the rationalism of the modern state

[14] Schelling 1962, 01: 69–71.

[15] A chronologically and systematically more appropriate candidate for the appellation, "oldest system program of German Idealism," would be Fichte's programmatic publication from 1794, entitled *On the Concept of the Wissenschaftslehre or the So-Called Philosophy*, which contains the sketch for an entire post-Kantian system architectonic (Fichte AA 1.2: 107–72).

and of modern religion into independent, complexly structured philosophical positions. Hölderlin, relying on Schiller's political vision of the education of the human being through free play and playful freedom, juxtaposed the modern shape of a political life in the state to the social ideal of philanthropic love, modeled on a neo-Greek ethos of political friendship. Hölderlin subsequently developed this counter-political project further into a Hellenizing private mythology from an ethico-theological perspective. Hegel, drawing both on ancient Greek conceptions of socio-political life (Aristotle) and on Scottish socio-economic philosophy (Adam Smith), separated the spheres of law and morality from the sphere of ethics or "ethical life" [*Sittlichkeit*]. Based on this separation, Hegel was able to effectuate the ethical trumping and transcending of the pre- and extra-political spheres of the family and civil society through the "political state," the latter now understood as an eminently ethical, even though not narrowly moral, institution.

Over the course of his long philosophical career, Schelling came to quite different results about the sense, the purpose, and the significance of stately community and its relation to other cultural life forms, such as art, science, and religion. Particularly striking is Schelling's mid-career radical redefinition of the relation between the state and the church, involving a dramatic reversal of views that is chiefly documented in the *Stuttgart Private Lecture Course* [*Stuttgarter Privatvorlesungen*] of 1810, a work belonging to the systematic context of the theogonic and anthropogenic speculations of the *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* from the previous year.[16] The sharp turn in Schelling's understanding of the state that occurs in 1809–10 is to be preceded by an earlier detailed position according to which the state is to be viewed primarily from the perspective of law. More specifically, in the context of his Transcendental Philosophy, the early Schelling considers the state as a condition for the possibility of self-consciousness; in the context of his Philosophy of Identity, he locates the state in close proximity to the absolute.

With his early fragmentary work, *New Deduction of Natural Law*, from 1795, Schelling anticipates Kant's and Fichte's publications in the philosophy of law, which appeared just a few years later, Fichte's *Foundation of Natural Law* being published in 1796–7 and followed by the publication of Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* in 1797. Like the early Fichte and unlike the later Kant, who subordinates both law and ethics to the principle of morality, the early Schelling opts for a treatment of the first principles of

[16] On the historical and systematic context of Schelling's essay on human freedom, see Zöller 2012b.

law independent of moral philosophy, which he conceives narrowly, and as restricted to ethics at the exclusion of law and right. The early Schelling subordinates law to the extra-moral principle of prudence, which regulates pragmatic acting in the rational pursuit of an end that is freely, if not arbitrarily, chosen. In the case of law, this contingently chosen end is the juridical ordering goal of the socially compatible use of individual freedom. This conception of law is developed by Schelling (and Fichte) on the basis of the juridico-political reflections in Kant's *Idea For a Universal History With a Cosmopolitan Purpose* (1784) and *Toward Perpetual Peace* (1795), without, however, sharing Kant's systematic localization of the problem of law within moral philosophy proper.

Schelling's early Fichtean program of deducing right and law as conditions of free intelligent agency is further elaborated in his *System of Transcendental Idealism* from 1800, which locates the sphere of law and right, including that of the state, outside of moral philosophy and treats the entire juridico-political sphere as a "second, higher nature" (SW 1.3: 583). The transition from the quasi-natural sphere of law and statehood to the praeter-natural development of freedom occurs in the domain of history under the guise of a quasi-religious process of revelation. Schelling further addresses the historical character of religion – specifically, of the Christian religion – in his *On University Studies* from 1803 (SW 1.5: 286–95). In the context of the roughly contemporaneous development of the Philosophy of Identity with its programmatic identification of the real and the ideal in a predisjunctive, undifferentiated unity (the absolute), Schelling construes the "perfect state" as the absolute unity of necessity and freedom and of the particular and the universal on the side of the real. As the ideal counterpart of the state's real absolute unity Schelling derives the church, which represents the unity of the absolute, or absolute unity, under the form of inwardness (SW 1.5: 313f.).

From the perspective of his emerging philosophy of history, Schelling notes the contrast between the socio-politically closed character of the ancient world, which knows freedom only as the ideal intellectual life of the few that are free, and the social heterogeneity and cultural plurality of the modern world ("world of mixture"), in which civic freedom assures difference and diversity at the expense of unity and identity, while secretly perpetuating the unfree conditions of the ancient world in a "most unfortunate mixing of slavery with freedom" (SW 1.5: 314f.). When sketching a modern counterpart to Plato's "republic" [*Republik*], which he regards as the sole "construction of the state" accomplished so far, Schelling reviews the recent developments in the area of natural law contributed by Kant and

Fichte, critiquing Kant for remaining caught in an external, mechanical conception of the state and applauding Fichte for his early attempts at an organic understanding of the state (SW 1.5: 315f.).

More generally, Schelling castigates the hitherto undertaken political attempts in theory as well as practice for their merely instrumental conception of the state as a means to something different from it and external to it, such as the material end of common well-being ("universal happiness") or the formal end of enabling freedom. By contrast, Schelling admits as the one and only end of the state the presentation of the identity of the absolute in the latter's organic external development. For Schelling, the state that should be construed in philosophical theory and erected in political practice is not the state as such and in isolation, but the state as the "absolute organism under the form of the state" (SW 1.5: 316). On Schelling's positive, organic understanding of juridico-political community, the state conceived along the lines of the Philosophy of Identity is a primary mode for the presentation and, for that matter, the realization of the absolute. From the perspective of the Philosophy of Identity, the idealistically reinterpreted state replaces art, which Schelling had claimed previously as the sole adequate objectivity of the absolute. The state thus becomes the objective counterpart of the subjective presentation of the absolute in philosophy. According to Schelling, even the church, religion, art, and science are "gone over into the state" (SW 1.6: 576).

III Church and state

In the *Stuttgart Private Lecture Course,* Schelling returns from the high esteem of the state as the worldly absolute, which he shows in the context of the Philosophy of Identity, to the radical skepticism and the sharp critique of the state to be found in the so-called "Oldest System Program," according to which the state is to be abolished and surpassed. But unlike in the earliest Schelling, the argument for the morbidity and mortality of the state and for its ultimate nullity is no longer cast in logical and epistemological terms – by way of proving that there exists a contradiction between nature and freedom in the state and that the machinery that is the state is incompatible with the idea of genuine community. Rather, Schelling now attributes the politico-philosophical problem of the state to the procedural nature of human freedom, which he first developed in the essay on human freedom from 1809, in the context of theological and anthropological speculations about the twofold, natural and spiritual constitution of the divine as well as the human being.

For the Schelling of the *Stuttgart Private Lecture Course*, the state is an expression of failed freedom. Adopting a decidedly religious and theological perspective, Schelling views the state as "a consequence of the curse lying on humanity" (SW 1.7: 461). Schelling's Stuttgart political theology locates the state in the problematic, fragile, and labile intermediary stage between the merely natural and the purely spiritual. Rather than contributing with the proper use of their freedom to the universal theogonic process of the transfiguration of nature into spirit, human beings, for the Schelling of the years 1809–10, have perverted the freedom that belongs to them. Instead of realizing that their freedom belongs to them only for the purpose of being surrendered, human beings have arbitrarily chosen to persist in the merely natural standpoint, thereby provoking the contrarian severance of nature outside of them, which now confronts them as a hostile power. In the process, the organic unitary connectedness of innocent nature is turned into a "realm of the inorganic," representing not a stable order, but a "not-unity" (SW 1.7: 460). Just as "inorganic nature" is subject to a "temporal, transitory bond," the state as a "second nature" is, on Schelling's account, only "precarious and temporary" (SW 1.7: 461).

On Schelling's Stuttgart analysis, the basic defect of the state lies in the contradictory connection between physically effected and effective unity ("natural unity") as a means and an extra- and supernatural end, i.e., the union of free beings as such ("ethical condition") (SW 1.7: 461). For the middle Schelling, the recent developments in political theory and practice – as exemplified by the French Revolution and by Kant's writings in the field, respectively – are doomed to fail from the beginning. On Schelling's assessment of political world history, the dilemma between a strong, and therefore also typically despotic state, and a state that respects individual freedom, which is typically inefficient, could be avoided only twice in older and recent history, in both cases on geopolitical grounds, viz., in ancient Greece and modern England. Due to the rare insular and peninsular situation involved, those cases cannot serve as models for modern Continental developments. Schelling explicitly criticizes the anachronistic and, *sit venia verbo*, anatopistic transposition of the exceptional situations of splendid isolation on to the Continental condition – as attempted by Fichte in his sketch of a "closed commercial state" – as the "worst despotism" (SW 1.7: 462).[17] For Schelling, the unavoidable consequence of the persistent pursuit of the "perfect state" under conditions of an

[17] For Fichte's political project of a state run, directivist national economy severed from international commerce, see Fichte 2012.

inadequate, naturalistically and individualistically curtailed conception of freedom is political despotism.

The state's basic incompatibility with "true and absolute unity" (SW 1.7: 462) renders actual existing states, in Schelling's eyes, mere approximations of the ideal of societal unity, which even when optimally approaching the quasi-organic ideal condition, are subject to the finite cyclical processes of growth and decline characteristic of all living things. Schelling draws on Plato for the insight that the rationally constituted, ideal state ("state of reason," "ideal of a state") is not to be realized in this world: "the true πολιτεία exists only in heaven" (SW 1.7: 462).[18] But unlike Plato, Schelling identifies specific ethico-theological circumstances that are the cause of the defects of humanly possible politics. For Schelling, the conditions of true politics and of the "absolute state" corresponding to it are "freedom and innocence" (SW 1.7: 462) – a freedom that has not rendered itself entirely self-centered, but has remained free of such failure and guilt, or has returned to such a condition. Accordingly, Schelling does not understand Plato's plan for an ideal state constitution as some technico-practical set of instructions for its actual realization, but as an ethico-practical appeal to first create the necessary conditions for its possible realization by means of the constitution or restitution of guiltless and guileless, "innocent" freedom.

The essential imperfection of politics under conditions of fallen freedom concerns not only the ethically insufficient inner constitution of the state. The relation between individual states, too, lacks a unity based on freedom and is governed instead by actual or potential war. For Schelling, the state of war between individual states is the historical equivalent of the "struggle of the elements in nature" (SW 1.7: 462). Together with the equally unavoidable ills and evils of physical existence that beset human beings, the persistently endangered political existence of human beings manifests, for Schelling, the degradation of the human being, more precisely, his self-degradation, into merely natural existence.

While Schelling believes that the depravation of human beings is the fault of their own false use and abuse of freedom, he expects an eventual "re-elevation" [*Wiedererhebung*] (SW 1.7: 463) of human beings, not by themselves alone, though, but by some divine redemptive process. Schelling understands the missing but mandated *restitutio ad integrum* of

[18] On the historical and systematic context of Schelling's theologico-political Plato reception, see Zöller 2013b. For a general account of the reception of Plato's *Republic* in the political philosophy of Kant and the German idealists, see Zöller 2014c.

humanity in analogy to the "initial creation," considering it a "second revelation" (SW 1.7: 463). On Schelling's view, both cases involve the necessity of a mediation – originally, under prelapsarian conditions, between nature and God under the guise of the creation of the human being, and finally, in a postlapsarian repetition, between the fallen human being and the redeemer God. On Schelling's account, the mediating function of the God incarnate ("Christ") between God and the human being in the fallen world (SW 1.7: 463) corresponds to the original mediating role of the human being for God's self-revelation in the original created world.

With the inclusion of the sphere of the state into the salvaging project of divine revelation, the state, previously understood as a "mere external unity," is now surpassed by the religious community ("church") that aims "at the production of an inner or mental unity" (SW 1.7: 463). On this view, the praeter-political church is not some additional and occasional development, but a "necessary consequence" of divine intervention in history ("revelation") and, in essence, nothing but the institutionalized "recognition" of that revelatory process (SW 1.7: 463f.). In particular, Schelling assigns the church and the state to the separate spheres of the "inner and outer world." Under the historical and contemporary conditions of the separation between the merely natural world and the purely spiritual world, the church, for Schelling, cannot be "an external power" (SW 1.7: 464). Accordingly, Schelling criticizes the political involvements of institutionalized religion in the latter's earlier, "hierarchical epoch," in which he finds fault not with religion's attempted influence on the state, but with the opening of the church to the state, its essence and concerns, due to which the church is said to have given up its prior "purity" and absorbed the deficient "forms of the state" into itself (SW 1.7: 464).

Turning specifically to the development of the relation between the church and the state in the Christian era, Schelling distinguishes two contrary movements: the historical, failed attempt to establish through the church an inner, spiritual unity that would manifest itself at once externally and politically; and the modern effort to establish the external unity of the state without recourse to the church's formation of its inner unity. Schelling sees a close connection between the principal distancing of the state from the formation of inner unity and the observable increase in external constraint ("political tyranny") (SW 1.7: 464). For Schelling, the ancient hierarchy and the modern polity are related extremes of a one-sided reductive treatment of the relation between the church and the state. For the future, Schelling dares to predict, based on hope, that eventually, after

the most advanced excesses of a state rendered loose and self-sufficient, humanity might manage to replace the hitherto prevailing extreme politico-theological solutions of a thoroughly religious state and a thoroughly secular state with "what is right" (SW 1.7: 464).

At the conclusion of his miniature *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* in the *Stuttgart Private Lecture Course*, Schelling offers, without clarifying further the remote goal of an equilibrated, lastingly peaceful state or stage of human history, some fragmentary reflections on how, if at all, that transhistorical goal could be reached, namely, solely "by the way of religion" [*auf dem religiösen Wege*] (SW 1.7: 464). According to Schelling, the required sublation of the state can occur only by means of "the highest and truly omnilateral development of the religious cognition in humanity" (SW 1.7: 464). The universal process of spiritualization envisioned by Schelling leads to a state that rids itself of the "blind force," up to now the constitutive factor for its operation and efficacy, replacing it with practically effective insight – a process described by Schelling in overtly religious language as the transfiguration of force into intelligence (SW 1.7: 464f.).[19]

But Schelling also stresses that the redefinition of the relation between the state and the church he prognosticates and propagates cannot be the dominion of one of these institutions over the other. The church is not to rule the state, nor is the state to rule the church. Rather, Schelling's theologico-political scenario for the future envisions the state developing itself toward religion, gradually unfolding "within itself the religious principle" (SW 1.7: 465). The "religious convictions" so developed and spread are, finally, to lead to a universal order of peace among the states ("federation of peoples") (SW 1.7: 465). To be sure, the theologico-political philosophy of history ("fate of the species on earth" [SW 1.7: 465]) remains a barely sketched program and prediction in Schelling's *Stuttgart Private Lecture Course*, which, moreover, refers to a distant future and presupposes an altered humanity.

Even independent of the theologico-political progress of humankind and in advance of it, it is in principle possible, on Schelling's account, for human beings as individuals to place their lives under the guidance of the religious principle and thereby to "hasten ahead of the species and anticipate the highest end for [themselves]" (SW 1.7: 465). Decades later, in his

[19] For a comparison of the political theology of the middle Schelling with the similarly oriented politico-theological position of the later Fichte, see Zöller 2013b; on Fichte's theologico-political popular philosophy, see Zöller 2010b and Zöller 2013c; on Fichte's political philosophy in general, see Zöller 2011.

Munich and Berlin lectures on the Philosophy of Mythology, Schelling returned to the program of a religious anticipation of the eventual historical development in the theologico-political sphere at the level of the individual. There he offered the diagnosis and prognosis of a religious way of life by means of which the individual – here and now, inwardly and spiritually – could reach beyond the politically corrupted reality, especially the evil that is the state (SW II.1: 544–62).[20]

IV State of right and state of religion

In situating the progress of human history at the level of the entire species rather than in the lives of individual human beings and in envisioning a supranational league for a global order of peace, Schelling's *Stuttgart Private Lecture Course* takes up Kant's ideas for a cosmopolitan historiography and an international pacific legislation. Schelling's exemption of individual religious life from a morally degraded world of politics and history, too, has its precursor in Kant, viz., in the modern adaptation of the Christian doctrine of grace and of Christian eschatology in Kant's late work, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. But the critical Kant and the politico-theological Schelling part ways in their basic assessment of the capability and effectiveness of the state and in their definition of the world-historical end stage of human development. Where the middle Schelling sees only insufficiency and unfreedom in the realm of the state, Kant grounds and founds the state as a state of right [*Staat des Rechts*] that enables and guarantees personal and civil freedom. And while Kant seeks to freely reconstruct key Christian doctrines by rational means as the history of the fall and rise of moral freedom, Schelling conceives of history merging into a terminal occurrence of revelation.

The deeper reason for the radically different assessments of the juridico-political sphere and its relation to the religious and theological domain in Kant and Schelling lies in their divergent views of the moral character of the state. While Kant regards the state as the only possible ground for the validity and the validation of civil rights and legal freedom, contrasting the state of right with the bellicose state of nature, Schelling sees the (political) state as essentially remaining within the state of nature and, therefore, turns his focus ahead of history to a kind of freedom that lies beyond the state's external ordering of freedom. Considering the state in the context of early modern theories of social contract and natural law, Kant focuses on

[20] On the political philosophy of history of the later Schelling, see Zöller 2013b.

the state's accomplishments for the legal culture of right. For Schelling, by contrast, the state is primarily an institute of constraint, exhibiting a reduced conception of freedom. Inversely, Kant sees in religion and theology a threat to the enlightenment of the intellect and the formation of the ethical character by fostering prejudice and intolerance, which are to be prevented by rationally purifying religion and purging theology. Schelling, by contrast, entrusts revealed religion and philosophical theology with a compensatory function for the false freedom afforded by the state.

Architectonically, the theologico-political divergence between Kant and Schelling reflects the different systematic place each of them assigns to the state. For Kant, the state is the result of the categorical imperative of right and belongs to the domain of practical philosophy. Hence, it forms an integral part of the legislation of freedom. For Schelling, the state is the result of prudential calculation on the part of theoretical philosophy (in the latter's technico-practical part) and hence subject to the legislation of nature. In Kant, the state as the state of right, while not being an ethical institution, still is a moral institution based on unconditionally valid practical (moral) principles. For Schelling, the state is afflicted with the original sin of willfulness and the curse of the anthropocentric revolt against the theo-cosmic order. To be sure, Kant, too, acknowledges institutions and laws that reach beyond the state and that aim at inner ethical motivation (morality) rather than at merely external conformity to law (legality).[21] In Kant, though, the ethical and ethico-religious laws are not a substitute for juridico-political legislation, but are a differently natured supplement of the latter. For Kant, the ethical and ethico-religious laws belong to a realm of validity external to law – a realm the recognition of which does not infringe upon legal principles and laws, but provides them with an additional, ethical sanction and motivation.

Schelling's radical critique of the existing state, along with his prognosis of the state eventually transforming itself from the externally juridical to the internally religious and becoming a state of religion or a religious state, calls into question the very status of the state as an institution of right and opens up the perspective on a future of humanity beyond the state and under the guidance of faith and piety. The individual anticipation of this eschatological post-political development in individual religious life, which Schelling also envisions, may still be compatible with the factual continued existence of the state of right. But the anticipated eventual, broadly societal, even global religious revolution from the political rule of the state

[21] See Kant AA 06: 219.

to the ethico-religious rule of the church amounts to a radical departure from juridically ordered and state-guaranteed freedom in favor of a theologico-religious understanding of freedom and its order that seems the ecclesiastical equivalent of the "political despotism" diagnosed and castigated by Schelling himself with regard to the secular state.

The ecclesiastical end of political history adumbrated by Schelling in the *Stuttgart Private Lecture Course* was soon to receive a thorough grounding and a detailed elaboration at the hands of his former mentor, subsequent competitor, and eventual opponent, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, in the latter's Berlin "Lectures of Assorted Content from the Applied Philosophy," the so-called Doctrine of State [*Staatslehre*] (1813, published posthumously in 1820).[22] In Fichte's late political philosophy of history, the state of right is replaced by a an ethico-religious communality, called "the realm" [*das Reich*], an egalitarian community of the free, who do freely and on their own insight what once had to be enforced by legal constraint. In the process, free rational self-determination is replaced by submission to the divine will [*Hingabe*]. Fichte describes the constitution of the future ethico-religious republic as a "theocracy," specifying that the latter is to be understood as a divine rule over people not based on "blind faith," but on "clear insight."[23] Despite their substantial doctrinal and methodological differences,[24] the Berlin Fichte and the Stuttgart Schelling join each other in an anti-modern alliance between a religious critique of the state and a philosophical founding of religious politics.

[22] See Fichte AA II.16: 13–177.
[23] Fichte AA II.16: 165. On the political pedagogics of the later Fichte, see Zöller 2009.
[24] On the extent of the philosophical differences between Fichte and Schelling, see Zöller 2012c.

CHAPTER 11

Schelling's critique of Hegel

Fred Rush

There had been no offer like it before nor has there been since. Friedrich Wilhelm IV had ascended to the Prussian throne in 1840 upon the death of his father. The father was an ineffectual monarch, most pleased by his wholesome moral reforms at court but most famous for losing in a rout the Battle of Jena to Napoléon and for having to flee with his retinue into the care of Alexander of Russia. The son, stung by the defeat of the father at the hands of the "radical French" and attracted to Romantic reverie about the Middle Ages, was a staunch conservative concerned to make sure that those whom he took to be dangerous, left-wing intellectual agitators were put down. Berlin was at a boiling point in his estimation. He chose a velvet-glove approach to the problem, more print than police baton, and appointed a philosopher to do the job of subjugation.

The philosopher in question was F.W.J. Schelling. The king was a keen patron of the arts and counted Schelling among his protégés, but Schelling had been out of the public eye for a quarter-century by 1840. Moving from his full-time teaching post in Würzburg in 1806 to Munich, Schelling had taken up there an important state administrative position. In 1820 he returned to lecturing, part-time, first in Erlangen, and then in Munich and Stuttgart. Still, his last philosophical publication was a fragment of the often promised, but never published, *Die Weltalter*, "Über die Gottheiten zu Samothrake" (1815); the last of his publications still read with any regularity is the even earlier "freedom essay" of 1809.[1] In 1827 Schelling began again to lecture full-time in Munich, where he had also become the private tutor to the future king of Bavaria, and in 1834 published a preface to a German translation of a work by Victor Cousin, in which he issues a withering assessment of Hegel and Hegelianism. The Munich lectures and the preface gave heart to the new Prussian king, who, promptly upon accession to the throne, asked Schelling to take up the philosophy chair in

[1] Translations of Schelling's and Hegel's works are mine.

Berlin that been vacant since Hegel's death. The communication to Schelling from the King was quite pointed, famously directing Schelling to go to Berlin to stamp out the "dragon-seed [*Drachensaat*] of Hegelian pantheism." I am unaware of another example of a monarch directly and by act of state appointing a philosopher to a university position. In any case, Schelling accepted. If Hegel is to be believed, the distant cannons at Jena in 1806 punctuated the finale of his composition of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Less apocryphally but more indirectly, it seems that the same artillery had brought Schelling to Berlin to realize the King's project of philosophical Restoration.

Schelling was no stranger to the prerogatives of the nobility. A prodigy bearing comparison to Leibniz or Mill, Schelling had taught himself excellent Latin, Greek, and both classical Hebrew and Arabic by the time he was twelve (his father was an "Orientalist") and entered university studies at the age of fifteen by means of a special law passed to waive the age limit for matriculation in his case. The university in question is now well known as having been a hotbed of the development of German Idealism, the Protestant seminary at Tübingen. At the Stift Schelling befriended Hölderlin and Hegel, with whom he spent a fair bit of time both in and out of his studies. Even in such fast company, Schelling was always the most gifted student, ranking first in class by some margin every year.[2] He defended his *Magister* dissertation in 1792 at the age of seventeen and took his doctorate at the age of twenty, a year that also saw publication of his *Vom Ich als Prinzip der Philosophie*, a work still regarded as seminal to the early development of German Idealism. This is just to drive home the point: from the very beginning Schelling was, and was known as being, conspicuously gifted. He went on in the late 1790s and early 1800s to become a philosophical superstar in Germany, and if his legend had faded perhaps, it was not altogether lost. The king calculated correctly: Schelling's re-entry into the philosophical scene had the magnetic effect of a myth rediscovered.

Schelling's first set of Berlin lectures, delivered in 1841–2, was a signal event in German intellectual history. Several of the thinkers who were to define in various ways the future anti-idealist path of German philosophy

[2] This is not precisely true. In his first year, Schelling was initially ranked second in class. It was the duty of the first student to make a speech and greet the Duke of Württemburg upon his visit to the Stift. The young man who was ranked first was shy, and it was not thought that he would make a very good impression. Schelling was the exact opposite of shy and was appointed to do the honors, which he did – as he apparently did all things – without fault. The Duke was so impressed that he ordered Schelling to be placed first, which he was. See Gulyga 1989: 16–17.

were in attendance: e.g., Bakunin, Burckhardt, Engels, Feuerbach, Alexander von Humboldt, Kierkegaard, and Ranke. Also in the audience were staunch defenders of Hegel's views, many of whom had been his students during his final years: e.g., Gans and Hotho. In the lectures Schelling unveiled to a broader public a distinction between two kinds of philosophy or two approaches to philosophical methodology that he had previously introduced in his Munich lectures: between "negative" and "positive" philosophy.[3] The philosophical system that occupies Schelling during his last years, the *Philosophy of Mythology*, depends upon this distinction being in force.[4] The audience reaction to Schelling's "positive" views ranged from boredom to bitter disappointment; there would be no "Young Schellingians" as a point of departure for mid-nineteenth century philosophy if membership in that camp required being a proponent of Schelling's Positive Philosophy.[5] The reception of Schelling's views on Negative Philosophy, in which he housed his critique of Hegelian idealism, was more enthusiastic.[6]

I The conceptual background: Schelling's Munich lectures

Schelling's lectures on the topic of "the history of modern philosophy" in Munich from the late-1820s to the late-1830s are the points of departure for

[3] Schelling sometimes traces the distinction back as early as his *Philosophical Letters on Dogmatism and Criticism* (1795). See SW 11.3: 83–4; cf. SW 1.1: 376. Schelling lectured on the subject of Positive Philosophy four times consecutively in the early 1840s.

[4] Schelling called his systematic philosophy from the 1820s "The Ages of the World." In 1832 he altered the denomination to "The Philosophy of Mythology." It contained three, dialectically interrelated parts: (1) "Grounding of the Positive Philosophy," (2) "Philosophy of Mythology," and (3) "Philosophy of Revelation." The content of the second and third components of the system remains fairly constant. Development of Schelling's views in his later philosophy falls on the first component – the conception of Positive Philosophy and, especially, its relation to Negative Philosophy. It is important not to take the idea of a system in Schelling in too arid a fashion. Like Fichte, whose philosophical and personal integrity were greatly admired by all the young philosophers at Jena in the late 1790s, Schelling views systems as productive expressions of thought that are arrested by being written down. That is why he emphasizes lecturing, as did Fichte, over treatise writing. In fact, Schelling goes Fichte one better, in a way, by embedding this evaluation of the purpose and nature of philosophical communication in a broader theory of human productivity. In the final analysis, a system is for Schelling a blatantly imaginative construct, expressive of the conceptual drive of its creator in ways not discontinuous with artworks.

[5] There were many such reactions. Kierkegaard's letter to his brother Peter, in which he reports that Schelling "talks nonsense," is representative. Kierkegaard 1953: 109–10; see also Kierkegaard's full assessment in Kierkegaard 1962. Even more damning is Engels' judgment. See Engels 1841, 1842a & b. See the appendices to Schelling 1993 for more testimony.

[6] It is unclear whether the edition of the Berlin lectures that was published by Schelling's son in SW derives from the 1841–2 set of lectures alone, from the 1842–3 set alone, or is a compendium of various sets.

his critique of Hegel's mature work.[7] Put in summary form, Schelling understands Hegel to be a hypertrophic rationalist, suspended between the twin poles of his Spinozistic and Fichtean heritage, and deploying a variant of the doctrine of preestablished harmony every bit as baroque as Wolff's (SW 1.10: 210f.).[8] This theodical doctrine introduces ad hoc constraints on the possible meaningful impacts of nature on subjectivity that conforms nature to rationality. Schelling's point of attack, thus, is the Hegelian attempt to colonize intuition with conception (SW 1.10: 138). For Hegel, "thought" comprises both categorization and intuition in one single system and does so in a way that assimilates the conditions on the latter in the direction of the conditions on the former. Schelling views this as a stipulative concoction, an ungainly hybrid for which no argument is given and which forces together two sources for experience that must be kept apart, i.e., cognitive capacities that are responsive to discursive requirements and cognitive capacities that are responsive to that which is absolutely ulterior to thought. According to Schelling, the aim of Hegel's theory of conceptuality is to establish that conceptual determination exhausts the world *as an ontological matter*, i.e., to secure the claim that there is no aspect of the world that is not the result of conceptualization, so understood (SW 1.10: 125, 212–13; see also SW 11.3: 162). Schelling lodges his charge using the Kantian vocabulary of "determination" [*Bestimmung*], a form of expression that Hegel also deploys in a modified form (SW 1.10: 82–3, 129f.). Kant's account of experience and of the basic constitutive operations that make experience possible accords precedence to judgment. Determination involves taking a given potential object and circumscribing its possible nature by conjoining it with a predicate. Because Kant and his followers hold that this activity is a necessary component of "having an experience," predication in judgment fixes the content of the experience as of that object under a description of it. For Kant, the categories and other pure concepts are the basic, invariant ways that things can be carved up in experience; articulation over and above that is provided by a posteriori concepts deployed in judgment, inferential structures joining individual judgments and classes of judgment, theoretical precepts governing the general aims of inference, etc. Schelling broadly accepts this picture of

[7] See also Schelling 1972 and 2010, where the distinction between Negative and Positive philosophy is on better display. Schelling's library was well-stocked with Hegel's works. See Müller-Bergen 2007: 39, 124–5, 231, 234.

[8] Schelling could also be critical of Leibniz on this count, but Leibniz remained for Schelling something of a philosophical hero (as he was to other Romantics) on account of his hylomorphism.

predication in judgment as a necessary component of possible reflective experience (see, e.g., SW 11.1: 335). When he criticizes Hegel's account of conceptuality he is alerting his audience, then, to what he takes to be an *overly strong* account of determination, one that allows the scope of determining thought to reach the base of what needs to be given for determination in the first place. On Schelling's interpretation of Hegel's logical writings, Hegel simply leaves no place for a coherent account of what determination could operate *on* (SW 1.10: 125–6). No matter how dialectical a philosopher Schelling is – he basically invents after all the diachronic dialectical philosophy that is Hegel's main methodology – he is unwilling to so reformulate the very conception of determination to accommodate what he takes to be immodest claims for thought to determine existence on that order: not merely what exists or even that there can be individuated existents more generally, but also that the world as a whole *is* at all (SW 1.10: 126–7). For Hegel, the idea of the world-as-a-whole boils down to the world as a totality of interrelated determinations, whose final status as determinations is holistically determined by their place in the whole that they constitute. For Schelling, the world as a whole is not a product of this sort; it is pre-conceptual and inherently indeterminate, what one might call instead of a totality a "world-all." Hegel's view is problematic, then, because for him thought is *both* the necessary *and* sufficient basis for *being* (SW 1.10: 143). His logic does not and cannot address Schelling's fundamental concern: that there is a world at all, something rather than nothing, a something prior to the very possibility of a structure like Hegel's logical system. Hegelian idealism, in Schelling's estimation, has no resources with which to stave off post-Kantian nihilism. It is too abstract, uncritical, and lacks a positive way forward.

Put another way, in terms of the vocabulary of German Idealism after Kant, Schelling's charge is that Hegel operates with an epistemically charged variant of intellectual intuition. This would be a hard charge for Hegel to take and, on the face of it, an even harder one for Schelling to make. The typical way that the concept of intellectual intuition makes an appearance in German Idealism is through Fichte, the idea of an unconscious faculty, pre-representational yet internally complex in its activities, from which conscious representation emerges. Because pre-representational and unconscious, such a faculty does not in itself suffice for determination or knowledge: it is a faculty of intuitive intellect. Schelling's charge against Hegel is not this one precisely; rather the contention is that Hegel presupposes an intellective intuition, i.e., a form of rational insight. But, again, it is important to be precise. This is not

rational insight in the sense of "faith" [*Glaube*] that operates as a basic state in Jacobi's philosophy. Hegel is critical of this view from 1801 onwards, and it would be a mistake to ascribe it to him in even a roundabout fashion. Jacobi's is an intuition whose rationality is *immediate*, and that is precisely what Hegel rejects at all costs.[9] Schelling's claim is, rather, that Hegel's brand of intellective intuition is *internally articulated*, indeed dialectically so.[10]

Still, one might find Schelling's protest against the idea of an internally articulated, intellective intuition pretty rich and, indeed, be tempted to reverse the charge. After all, Schelling did not hold back in his own earlier days from giving a central place to something like this idea. Of course, it might be that the criticism is directed *sub silentio* at his earlier views. It is hard to completely discount the possibility. The contortions of Schelling's development from system to system are quite difficult to account for comprehensively, and there is a completely understandable approach to his work that disavows establishing continuity from early to middle and from middle to late. Even such periodization is chancy. Nevertheless, there is a strain of his work bearing on this question of the role of intellectual intuition that is surprisingly constant.

Schelling's early work is a massive coordination exercise in accounting for the possibility for interaction of subjective spontaneity and nature, an attempt to marry results he claimed to have achieved in the Philosophy of

[9] For Hegel's part, the naïve concept of intuition is that of immediate experience and, while experience being immediate does not entail on all philosophical theories that experience is non-conceptual, we saw that in German Idealism there is a close relationship between immediacy and non-conceptuality. For Hegel any item that appears as immediate is in fact mediated. The general structure of mediation for Hegel is that of "self-reflection," which is implicit in experience taken to be immediate. On Hegel's analysis any purportedly immediate experience necessarily involves experiencing *as of* a sort. That is, any immediate experience of *x* necessarily involves experiencing *x as immediate-x*. He analyzes immediacy as a property, or something like it (e.g., a mode, a universal), and that ruins the claim of absolute immediacy (HW 03: 82–92). Hegel often puts the matter in terms of the concept of differentiation, arguing that it is a necessary condition on individuation and identity. Even if one were to attempt to cordon off immediate experience from conceptual contamination, any experience must be a *this*-experience, and that can only be the result of differentiation. All differentiation requires mediation, so all experience does as well. Hegel calls this process of differentiation, as was commonplace in philosophy of the time, "negation." This is a structure of "*self*-reflection" in a special sense. Every experience according to Hegel has internal to it a formal component of differentiating itself over and against other possible articulations. The other articulations need not be expressly contained in the experience as such; rather, negation works with a steady sense of what is contained within the experience and a rather abstract sense of limitation that follows from the barest thought that any articulated experience, any experience of *this*, presupposes at least a vague contrast with an experience of *that*. Substituting for the concept "experience" that of "concept" allows one to make what is essentially the same point relative to Hegel's two best-known works, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Logic*.

[10] See Förster 2011.

Nature with a recognizably idealist account of constitutive subjectivity. The key to this marriage is the relation of product to producing, and the key point of departure for Schelling is, in a way, Kant's third *Critique*. Put a bit crudely, what Kant demonstrated there was that human subjectivity could be oriented toward nature not just as a forming agency according to discursive and intuition constraints, but also in ways that take nature to be *already formed* for subjective intake. Beautiful things and organisms share this: not only do their structures not require being formed according to concepts of the understanding, but such applications also defeat them as beautiful and as organisms. What unites them as entities is a holistic focal point. In such structures, parts depend on wholes as final causes; accordingly, viewing the structures as generally purposive without subsuming them under one purpose or another is of the essence for their aesthetic and teleological judgment. In Schelling's estimation, however, Kant's dualism between nature and freedom foreordains a tepid result; forced by his account of determining judgment, Kant treats the necessity to understand beauties and organisms as a merely regulative assumption on behalf of intelligibility that cannot convey true objectivity. Schelling's gambit to close the gap between nature and subject is to view the point of unification of natural objects (the exemplary ones for him are organisms, but the point is supposed to generalize across all nature) as the completed focus of prior productive activity on the part of nature. This has the status of a transcendentally mandated and constitutive principle for him. That is, on pain of incoherence one must assume such productive self-organization on the part of nature, otherwise knowledge would be impossible. Nature is productive of its own forms and this turns out to be at least partly homologous with the forming activity by subjects of nature in cognition. Cognition is a product of mind, but it is just a special case of the broader productivity of nature, which develops through time progressively into more and more recombinant, advanced forms. Minds are products of nature at the highest levels of its "potency," a point at which production itself can be reflective. Reflective production is highly, yet contingently, organized natural potency; it does not introduce into the scheme a difference in kind between natural and human production. From the point of view of the theory of knowledge, i.e., from "thought," the upshot is this: as a general matter, knowledge requires strict correspondence between the object known and the knowing of it. "Strict correspondence" means something like a one-to-one relation of elements across different structures, such that the result of an operation on one structure corresponds to the result of applying the same operation to the other structure (SW 1.1: 386).

Schelling's guiding thought is that, within the scope of human reflective production, this sort of correspondence in its most rudimentary form is present in self-intuition. Intuition is itself a form of produced production, one that can register a "lack" [*Mangel*] in its productive self-sufficiency relative to productive nature and a correlative lack of absolute being on the part of self-consciousness (AA 1.9.1: 155ff., 262–4; SW 1.3: 455ff., 565–6). This is so because it is this intuitive state or activity that immerses the subject as far as possible in non-discursive productivity as she can get without losing purchase on discursivity altogether, thereby implicitly registering the gap between the productivity of what is grounded and what is grounding (see SW 11.1: 294–5).[11] It is an activity, that is, in which what is intuited and what intuits are as close to being one and the same as it is possible to experience. If nature's non-intentional (viz. unconscious) productive self-differentiation is understood as the primordial form of *desire* – as Schelling often puts the matter – then what is most basic is a contingently ever-productive, ever-mutating, and impassive realm of being. Reason, relative to this whole, is in a way "accidental," not something rationally foreordained.

Nature is modeled, then, within the internal ambit of the subject, in self-intuitional or self-desiring terms; otherwise there would be no structural correspondence available to reflection between nature as known and its presence in knowing subjects. Part of elaborating the structure that follows from self-intuition qua desire in subjects is to emphasize the theoretical importance of viewing cognition as purposive and not merely as an inert intellectual framework. Viewed in the broadest terms possible, from a distance inclusive of both subjectivity and nature, this is because they are part of one and the same productive whole.[12]

[11] Schopenhauer is close to Schelling in aiming for this theoretical result. The proximity of Schopenhauer to Schelling is emphasized in Hartmann 1869. Hartmann's view is led by his most significant original work in philosophy, *Philosophie des Unbewußtseins*, published in the same year as this, his second book on Schelling. Hartmann views Schelling's systematic analysis of the relation between nature and mind as a preferred way to strike a balance between the two main approaches to the relation of will to reason in the early nineteenth century: Schopenhauer's, which according to Hartmann submerges the latter in favor of the former, and Hegel's, which grants priority in the opposite direction. Schelling's approach, which treats the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of spirit as two sides of the same coin, with unconscious forces achieving different balances with reason relative to each side, appealed greatly to Hartmann. Hartmann is largely forgotten in standard histories of European philosophy of the period – he held no academic appointment in a period all but dominated by university professors. His work was influential on Jung and, it seems, independently on Freud. He comes in for harsh treatment in the second of Nietzsche's *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen*.

[12] The Schelling of the 1800 *System* held that there could only be *aesthetic* knowledge of the structural coincidence of nature and self – that the highest form of self-intuition was artistic reception. His reason for holding this view is itself very complex, having to do with the historical account of mind

This idea that a system develops by internal, productive differentiation over time (i.e., over "history") was extremely attractive to Hegel of course. Moreover, the guiding idea that one finds in Schelling's work prior to his turn to Identity Philosophy in the early 1800s – that it is not so much the products of a system that are important, but rather their relation to one another in terms of the necessity of movement imparted on them by the impetus as it is expressed by its developing forms of the system – is crucial for Hegel. But Schelling never claimed that one could penetrate into the impetus itself by means of thought. No matter how much one gerrymandered what counts as a concept, the world as a whole was not something to which thought could give closure.[13] There is productive overlap between nature and subject, which contains all of spontaneity as a proper part. But the part cannot demonstrate that it reflects the whole. Schelling's own view of the relation between conceptualization and its ultimate material in what he called "being" was always one that required strict logical space between the conceptual formation of the world and the world's being given for such formation. Hegel, on the other hand, at least in Schelling's understanding, does make such a claim for closure, thus the main thrust of the Munich lectures: that Hegel reduces being to being-thought. Schelling allows that if Hegel's *Logic* were merely a system of concepts that claimed to set out the necessary conceptual conditions for anything to be experienced, such a system, whatever else its merits, would not offend the primary constraint that being (from now on I shall call this "being-as-such") is also a necessary condition of experience.[14] This is the problem with the all-important starting point of Hegel's logical system, the treatment of "being."[15] On Schelling's interpretation, Hegel's logic is a massive mistake of fundamental ontology, a series of arguments concerning the interconnection of

that he undertakes there. The coarse read is that in artistic production and reception, the material making over of nature in terms of artistic intent shows in one event or act both nature at its most amenable to being intentionalized and intentionality at its most open to being naturalized. In aesthetic intuition the subjective and natural structures are in maximal *actual* coincidence. Discursively one can only approximate total reach into what is given in intuition; artistic creation, in its balancing of free creativity within intuition and conception, can achieve an immediate intimation of it (AA 1.9.1: 312–29; SW 1.3: 612–29).

[13] Hegel sometimes put his philosophical project in terms of unifying the thought of Fichte and Spinoza in a higher order synthesis. Fichte is important for Schelling of course, but the contrasting figure for him is Leibniz, or a version of Leibniz. What Schelling finds crucial in Leibniz is his anticipation of the concept of potency in that of a force whose results are determinations. Dynamism precedes objectivity. This is present in Kant too, of course, but is only problematically applied *de re*.

[14] As well he might, given that he intimates over and over again that Hegel's philosophy is just a replication of the negative component of his own.

[15] HW 05: 83f.

thoughts that is supposed to culminate immanently in establishing that "the Concept" is coextensive with all that there is. Even if the links of the presentation – all of its dialectical analyses – were well-founded, all that Hegel's logic would establish is a necessary system of *thought* of the world – something on the order of a substitute for Kant's Table of Categories or, more than that, akin to a coherence theory of truth.

II The importance of immanence

Schelling seems to be after more than alerting one to what he takes to be the defects in Hegel's views on the nature of concepts. As it stands, such criticism is only compelling if one accepts Schelling's analysis of what a concept is and rejects Hegel's conception of the same. That is not nothing of course, but that criticism would not devastate Hegel's system from within; it would not show the system to be incoherent and, more importantly, would not do so in a dialectical fashion. But it is clear that Schelling does aim to draw untoward consequences from within Hegel's own theory by its own lights, with the centerpiece claim that a transition from conceptual determination to nature is not dialectically sound (SW 1.10: 152–3). Be that as it may, Schelling's criticism fails on this measure. As it is presented in the Munich lectures, it does not undermine Hegel's analysis of "being" by constructing an argument from premises that Hegel would accept to a conclusion that he cannot, nor is there any other type of argument to the effect that Hegel's system is internally incoherent.[16]

How philosophically significant is this failure? Hegel himself is of course committed to responding immanently to any rival basic philosophical claim, identifying the qualified sense in which it is true, as well as its shortcomings. He does not exactly live up to the commitment in the case of Schelling, however, and this has important ramifications for adjudicating the dispute between the philosophers. Hegel is famously silent about Schelling in print after their falling out over a glancing, oblique, and dismissive reference to the Identity Philosophy in the Preface to the *Phenomenology*.[17] But one can extract a likely reaction to the doctrine of

[16] Horstmann 1991: 245ff. is an excellent survey of the deficiencies of Schelling's interpretation of Hegelian categories, especially those pertaining to Hegel's philosophy of nature. See also Schulz 1975: 105–6.

[17] Hegel attempts to deflect Schelling's upset at the remark in the Preface (HW 03: 22) by responding in a letter that he, Hegel, meant only to disparage those who mouthed Schelling's doctrines without understanding. See "Letter of Schelling to Hegel," November 2, 1807, in Hegel 1969: I: 194.

being as such from Hegel's well-known aversion to immediacy.[18] German Idealism often attempts to bring home the centrality of the way it handles the problem of immediacy, or of intuition, by endorsing a certain approach to thinking about the nature of *identity*. Take the statement "A = A." Traditional logic would treat such a statement as unanalyzable, as a basic statement of identity of two things, perhaps differently described but perhaps not. The analysis that such statements of identity receive from Fichte on German Idealism, however, is not so simple. Identity of the sort expressed in "A = A" is relational and this relational character is given an ontological face: identity statements involve ontological separation of the two items standing in relation to one another. That is, the identity requires prior differentiation. The judgmental statement of such identity is, then, really a form of re-identification. On the other hand, what idealists call "absolute identity" is not relational at all: it is a thing's being the same with itself, being *selfsame*. Those thinkers in proximity with idealism, but perhaps more accurately classified as "Romantics" – Hölderlin, Novalis, Friedrich Schlegel, and Schelling – emphasized rigorously the difference of these two sorts of identity. They argued that being selfsame, viz. absolute identity, is foundational for relational, or for what they termed "relative," identity. These Romantic philosophers were especially concerned to root out conflations of the two sorts of identity in just those thinkers who had recognized the difference but had still fallen prey to more subtle forms of conflation. The famous case is Fichte, who was the target of this sort of critique by Novalis, Schlegel, and Schelling.

In what is still in many ways the most insightful treatment of Hegel's struggles with immediacy, Dieter Henrich argues that Hegel's account is compromised by just the conflation outlined above between two senses of "identity."[19] The *Logic* opens with a dialectical transition between "being" and "nothing," in which "being" (i.e., pure, unadulterated being) yields its dialectical opposite, "nothing" under pressure of philosophical analysis and, thereby, forces upon one the proposition "being is nothing." This statement of identity cannot be thought in a way that is not an outright contradiction except under the condition that one advances a more comprehensive category that can accommodate both terms in the statement, a way to state something like identity where the terms are not really contradictory. Hegel claims that what is meant by the statement "being is nothing" is not that being *is* nothing; rather it is that being is what is not-yet, i.e., the proposition "being is becoming."[20] As the argument of

[18] See note 9 above. [19] Henrich 1971. [20] HW 05: 83.

the *Logic* progresses through its various stages, more and more conceptual layers are imposed on the understanding of pure "being" to the point where, at the end of the proceedings, nothing less than "the Concept," i.e., the entire set of conceptual interconnections and dependencies charted by the *Logic*, is required for the specification and understanding of this concept (or any other). It is crucial for the derivation of the structures accreted that "being" is, in the first place, both: (1) selfsameness, i.e., a structure with no internal differentiation and (2) differentiated, as anything would have to be. There must be, that is, a discrepancy within the category of being. Hegel requires being to depend upon reflective structure – thus the direction of proof of the dialectical analysis in the *Logic*. But that seems to require, in turn, one of two prior claims. One either (A) identifies absolute being with relative being or one (B) rules absolute being out of court as an ill-formed concept.[21] The point is that, either way, Hegel has introduced a presupposition into what is supposed to be a completely immanent set of arguments.[22] Hegel has either assumed without further argument the identity of the two sorts of being or set the troublesome idea of absolute being to the side.

The importance of this result here is that it shows that Hegel is on no better footing than is Schelling when it comes to immanent critique of the other's position, for Hegel begs the question against views like Schelling's, according to which being is completely ulterior to conception or universality. In fact, Hegel seems to be in slightly worse shape, since Schelling

[21] My parsing of the argument differs from Henrich's somewhat; he concentrates on the issue of impermissible identification. See Henrich 1971: 128f.

[22] If one understands Hegel's overall project to be to offer a kind of Kantian framework analysis and not a full-blooded ontology, Henrich's criticism has less bite. If one interprets Hegel as holding that it is not possible to model within thought that which is radically unlike thought without modeling it *in terms of* thought, then Hegel would not contest that there is being "outside of" thought, nor even that it has a necessary role to play in experience arising in the first place. The point is rather that thinking imposes a transcendental limitation akin to the ancient Greek epistemological principle of "like to like" that precludes assimilating being to thought *for the purposes of thought*. See Pippin 1989 and Pinkard 1996 for such treatments. If Hegel's system does not need to be scrupulously without presupposition, which it cannot be if it is a transcendental schema, then he is free *ceteris paribus* to elect to implement the two senses of immediacy at different levels of transcendental analysis. While Hegel may have no *substantial* account of being-as-such, he at least can nod in the direction of the idea of cognitive limit that it is the business of the *concept* of being-as-such to enforce. This does not mean that Schelling would accept that such a Kantian construal of Hegel's aims in the *Logic* would absolve him from the errors of negative philosophy. After all, no matter how much Schelling esteems Kant, Kant is after all a negative philosopher whose "regressive" method in establishing the basis of cognition is ultimately deficient in Schelling's view. Kant does not treat being "progressively," but he is at least more honest than Hegel in this regard. In what follows, I assume the correctness of a more metaphysically robust form of Hegel's philosophy, as did Schelling.

never unambiguously claims that proper philosophical systems *must* be without presupposition.[23] So, instead of warring dialectical approaches to one another's views, perhaps the case is better viewed as a dispute over a fundamental issue that divides them: how to reconstruct within a conceptual framework an idea of what exceeds that framework, a question of two rival approaches to the problem of what resources are available to the idealist for preserving enough of the proper sense of "being." I return to this issue below.

For now, what emerges is that, while Schelling cannot offer a properly eristic assessment of Hegel's opening dialectic in the *Logic*, he really needn't do so. And he should have recognized that Hegel, by his own lights, begs the question against the view according to which being-as-such is a proper constituent of experience. Perhaps Schelling ought to have taken a more resolute realist stance on the probity of first principles: either one sees the necessity for some account of being-as-such, conceptual though it may have to be, or one doesn't. If one does, one encapsulates this common sense within what will turn out to be a much less commonsensical and highly articulated philosophical position and, as the articulations compound, it will be important to trace one's train of thought back to being, back to the things themselves. If one does not see the necessity for an account of being-as-such, one is being oblivious to what is obvious: that the world "is," in the "absolute" sense, whether there is thought or not. The best that Hegel can offer, by Schelling's lights, is a conception of being as what is *thinkable* in the thinnest possible fashion. Hegel's concept of being excludes nothing; Schelling's own includes everything.

III Hegel as "negative" philosopher

Up to this point, I have attempted to chart what I take to be the main terrain of the dispute between Hegel and Schelling, both as Schelling understood that dispute in the 1830s and as he should have understood it, without reverting explicitly to the cardinal distinction I mentioned at the outset which Schelling deploys in his later thought: between "negative" and "positive" philosophy. The reason for not engaging the distinction until now involves conceptual clarity and charity in equal parts. The stakes between Schelling and Hegel are most clearly on view without muddying

[23] This is a point that divided Schelling and Hegel early on. Of course, one might hope that one *can* generate an immanent critique. See Frank 1975: 54f. for an insightful discussion.

the waters with a distinction that may be taken to operate high-handedly and at a great theoretical remove from close philosophical argument. It is easy to take the impression that Schelling defaults to what is essentially a taxonomic device in his critique of Hegel and Hegelians, courting the adverse response that Schelling legislates Hegel's views out of bounds in a preemptory fashion.

It may seem clear that Hegel is a negative philosopher, even *the* negative philosopher. Schelling waffles on the point. He states that he finds it hard to do Hegel "the honor" of inclusion in the ranks of Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, and Fichte (SW 11.3: 80). This is because, even though Hegel passes the test of one whose system is merely conceptual (SW 11.3: 59–60), he pushes negativity "beyond its own limits" in claiming a positive role for it, and that seems to disqualify him (SW 11.3: 80). This back of the hand is not merely rhetorically aimed; it indicates a real issue from the side of Positive Philosophy regarding, in the rearview mirror as it were, Negative Philosophy. Claims of transition to positivity from within negativity will receive the strictest scrutiny from Schelling. Still, it seems churlish to deny Hegel the status entirely. Negative Philosophy for Schelling is characterized by an overarching emphasis on the discovery of a priori and strictly necessary rational structures that govern the knowable world. It establishes its findings at the expense of the singularity of entities, treating them as philosophically significant only insofar as they are instances of universals (see SW 11.3: 87–8). Negative Philosophy is concerned with conceptual relations only and, therefore, with "possibility" alone. The idea stems from rationalism. Conceptual determination requires various logical forms of contrast, assimilation, and coherence, but even the maximal balance of consistency, plenitude, and unity only relates to the world in terms of ways it *might* be thought to be. This is "negative," again, because of the technical use of the term "negation" in German Idealism, adapted from the idealists' understanding of Spinoza. To determine, and thus to establish the base upon which rational relation operates, is to negate, i.e., to establish the identity of a thing over and against other things that it is *not*. According to Schelling, there is nothing inherently wrong with Negative Philosophy, so long as it recognizes its limitations (SW 11.3: 80). He holds that speculating beyond the bounds of reason can extend rationality in positive ways so long as it is done circumspectly. Moreover, it is only by engaging in Negative Philosophy that one can achieve the circumspection and lay the ground for a transition to Positive Philosophy. Negative Philosophy does not end by establishing a proposition that it can do no further work with and "hand it off" to its positive counterpart as a

"ground" (SW 11.3: 89–92). Negative Philosophy bequeaths to Positive Philosophy rather a "task" not a "principle" (SW 11.3: 93). Negative speculation can never establish the existence of that upon which conception ultimately works; what lies completely outside its domain can only be given in its existence through what Schelling calls "experience" [*Erfahrung*] (SW 11.3: 61–2). Experience has nothing inherently to do with reason or conception; unlike in Kant where the term denotes the successful combination of intuitional and discursive elements and is itself cognitive, Schelling uses the term to indicate completely concept-free, direct awareness of things.[24] It is a modality of sheer being-open to things and marks the line between what can be known a priori (thoughts and structures of thought) and a posteriori (the world).[25] "A priori experience" would be a contradiction in terms for Schelling.[26]

Calling receptivity to being-as-such a "modality" is not quite correct, however, and this brings out another point in understanding Schelling's conception of Negative Philosophy. Schelling incorporates his own version of an idea one might trace back, again, to Kant, i.e., that there is an ineluctable illusion that goes along with the machinations of reason when it is left to its own devices. The illusion is always present as a first response even when one knows of it; one guards against it by a system of checks, much in the way (Kant uses this image) one cannot help but see a mirage but one corrects one's beliefs about its reality through the application of other beliefs developed at higher, more "critical" levels of reasoning. Just in this way, Negative Philosophy attempts to render in its native terms matters that are properly outside its ambit, for instance, being-as-such. The hothouse for growing such overreaching branches of rationality for Schelling is the category of *necessity*. Negative Philosophy can properly demonstrate certain of its structures to be necessary, even strictly so. This is indicative of the greatest power of thought and, therefore, is also thought at its most suspiciously self-inflated. The danger of inflation follows from the impetus of conceptual necessity to conform thought wholly to itself, for necessity is strongly exclusionary relative to the sheer atmosphere of

[24] Sometimes Schelling uses the term "Vorstellung" in similar ways. See SW 11.3: 173. This seems more directly to refer to a mental *capacity* for pure receptivity to being and not the result of having the capacity, as does "Erfahrung." Again, the important point is that *Vorstellung* is not representational in Kant's sense.

[25] Cf. Heidegger's conception of *Gelassenheit*.

[26] One of the most alluring aspects of the idea of a priori *experience* is that it provides a way to do proper credit to mathematical knowledge and the reality of the entities to which mathematics refers. Schelling demurs; such knowledge is a posteriori but non-sensuous. See SW 11.3: 169–71.

possibility in thought. Establishing the necessity of some concept or inference is to rule out others and, if the necessity is strict, to rule out all possible others. Necessity, that is, is highly stabilizing within thought, and that stabilization is easy for thought to mistakenly translate into ersatz being-as-such *within thought* and then project it outwards in wishful thinking – part of what Schelling means by "mythic" thought.[27] Being-as-such becomes actuality *cum* necessity by means of such translation. Schelling is very concerned to show this to be a cardinal philosophical error. Actuality as a byproduct of modal thought is precisely not the same as being "factical" [*faktisch*] or a "pure act" [*actus purus*]. Necessity, and here Schelling goes well beyond Kant and Fichte, has no proper place in being-as-such. Necessity, like the identity expressed in judgments, is relational – "relative," not "absolute." When Schelling feels that he must characterize being-as-such in terms of necessity, it is clearly circumlocution for effect. He calls such being "simply necessary" in order to make the point that its "necessity" lies in its *just being*, in that it can *only* be actual (SW 11.3: 167–8). Being-as-such is what one might call "modally obdurate" then; it is neither "necessary" nor "possible" in the standard philosophical senses of these terms, for these terms are dialectically related in their standard conceptual senses according to Schelling. Something necessarily being the case conceptually follows from its having "filled out" all of its possibilities. Being-as-such may provide an ontological platform for thinking modally about the world, and in that sense for worldly modalities, but it is not in and of itself subject to modality.[28] Necessity, then, may be as close to being as thought can get by its native means, i.e., concepts. But if looked at the other way around, it is as far as thought can get from being. To bring home the point, again, in terms of Schelling's critique of Hegel, the hidden point of Hegelian dialectic is to shrink the contingency of being-as-such to the environment provided by necessity. The structure of Hegelian dialectic that expresses this domestication is the "negation of the negation." As we shall see below, Schelling deploys a version of this idea, but untethered from the claim that negation of negation can instantiate a closed conceptual structure. Because Hegel's logic is auto-teleological, it stultifies contingency. In the terms of Schelling's Philosophy of Nature, one might say that Hegelian dialectic

[27] In his Stuttgart lectures, Schelling refers to this as a form of "scholasticism." See SW 1.7: 421.

[28] One might think that these and other claims that Schelling makes about the nature of being-as-such are open to what amounts to "Trendelenberg objections" to Kant's treatment of similar issues. It is interesting to note in this connection that Trendelenberg was in the audience for at least some of Schelling's 1841–2 lectures.

attempts to portray the animate within the inanimate and is, in this way, mechanistic in spite of itself. Try as it might to enforce organic form on concepts, the fact remains that concepts can only go so far in this direction before they either give out or construct by their native means compensatory illusions.

IV Schelling's own inversion of thought and being: Positive Philosophy

What is the path forward for philosophy, according to Schelling, after the pretensions of Negative Philosophy have been reined in? This is where Positive Philosophy, Schelling's most arcane invention, comes in. It seems to me that the Berlin audience took fair measure of what Schelling had on offer, at least in the form he offered it. Still, one might hesitate to dismiss Positive Philosophy quite so out of hand, if one could reconstruct its impetus and structure in such a way that it did not depend quite as much as it seems on revamped Christian theology.

Schelling's diagnosis of the deficiencies of Negative Philosophy leaves open the possibility that one could, quite self-consciously, deploy elements of thought *indirectly* to arrive at a model of thinking of being-as-such within thought that would still properly render the transcendence of thought by being. The methodology Schelling adopts, formally speaking, is a version of one that he might well have picked up in his time in Jena, a procedure of *inverting* standard forms of intellectual discourse when modeling being-as-such within that discourse.[29] The early German Romantics Novalis and Friedrich Schlegel had each their own conceptions of inversion, and their views were well-known among the tightly-knit group of intellectuals in Jena at the time. Novalis in several of his study notes on Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* of 1794 and in his contributions to the journal *Athenäum* proposes a procedure of *ordo inversus*, by which a judgment concerning "the absolute" installs as a component of its structure a reversed reflexivity indicative of a proviso to the effect that all conceptualization of the absolute is but an obscure mirror-image inverting the order of creator and created. Schlegel's conception of irony is another form of inverted dialectic, even more radical in its conception and more extensive in its

[29] Schelling lived in Jena from 1798 until 1803. Bowie 1993: 130–40 identifies his earliest use of the term "inversion" in student notes taken on Schelling's 1820–1 Erlangen lectures, published later under the title *Initia Philosophiae Universae* (SW 1.9: 209–46). A critical edition of this work is available as Schelling 1969.

execution.[30] Schelling's species of inversion plays with a form of fire that he denounces in other applications, i.e., the idea that being must be represented from within a discursive system by treating it as an object of divine intention. One of Kant's failings in Schelling's estimation is to allow this sort of anthropomorphizing even if only for regulative purposes. For, one might argue, whatever appearances to the contrary, Schelling's Positive Philosophy need not revert to the notion of God as an intentional being (cf. SW 11.3: 91; but see, e.g., Schelling 1972: 75–6). God just is being-as-such for him. Even when Schelling turns to questions of constructing a positive mythology – a religion – that is properly "progressive," he is glad to survey the many religions of the world (as was Hegel of course) in order to distill from them what he takes to be of essence. And that is the notion that the creation bears within it the hidden mark of its creating. So, although a god with intentions is a well-known idea with a long shelf life in modern philosophy, there *are* other conceptions of the relationship of creation to creator that especially interested Schelling – e.g., Bruno's.[31] The idea that creation within nature is *unconscious* is of primary importance to Schelling from the time of his early writings. Perhaps that gave way to a more supernatural conception of first cause and perhaps the idea of divine intention in creation creeps in at points – most of the Romantics who made it to old age became more conservative. In any case, if an idea of a personal God is part of the necessary inversion, it is not clear that this need be more than methodological.[32] The religious aspects of Schelling's Positive Philosophy may not have been the only thing that riled his audience in auditorium six of the Berlin University, but it is easy to see how this appeal to the methodological primacy of God and ontological arguments might well have disappointed. To the Young Hegelians, it must have seemed the

[30] When thinkers like Novalis and Schlegel speak of "the absolute" what they refer to is the ultimate source for thought, i.e., for "subjectivity." Hölderlin, on the other hand, means by "Seyn" that which, in its self-division ["Urteil"], makes any individuated being possible. Hegel, at least on the metaphysical interpretation of his thought, wishes to be in Hölderlin's camp. Schelling's later work shifts away from the absolute as a source for subjectivity to the more realist camp, but the seeds for this were always present in the way Schelling conceived of the relation of his systems of Transcendental Philosophy and Philosophy of Nature.

[31] Schelling wrote a philosophical dialogue on Bruno in his Jena days, which both inspired and perplexed its audience, e.g. Goethe. For a short but authoritative treatment of Bruno, see Kristeller 1964.

[32] It was common for Romantics who began in their early writings elevating art metaphysically to later turn to an aesthetic form of religion as central – Schleiermacher is a crucial figure here, but the development from Hegel's treatment of *Kunstreligion* in the *Phenomenology* to his account of religion superseding art in the various *Lectures on Aesthetics* is also illustrative. Late Schlegel and late Schelling are the most conservative cases. For an argument that art is a more abiding concern for the late Schelling, see Jankélévitch 1933.

worst sort of backpedaling away from naturalism and into the old conceptual thickets of rational theology. On the other side of the room, as it were, appeal to the standard resources of rational religion to talk about being was a lack of true religiosity, a view that Kierkegaard would promote throughout his short philosophical career.[33]

What is indisputable is that the inversion Schelling attempts moves away from the concept of God as it is present under the aegis of Negative Philosophy alone – i.e., as the highest thought-of thinking being (rationalism) or highest thought (Kant) – to the idea of God as what is present at the beginning of thought, i.e., as a source for what is given prior to thought for thought. The inversion will operate on the crowning apparent achievement of Negative Philosophy, the concept "God" as a necessary being (SW 11.3: 168–9), and the operation will allow construction of a concept of God as the condition precedent for any thought, and thus for necessity and possibility as such. This is why Schelling always in his later thought presents Negative Philosophy as establishing in its conclusions the basis for Positive Philosophy: it establishes the basis for the inversion. While Negative Philosophy must think of God as an *ens realissimum ac necessarium*, Positive Philosophy pivots on just that idea to generate the conception of being-as-such qua God. For Schelling, as we saw, thought alone is relatively impotent in its worldly results. Schelling's Positive Philosophy attempts to preserve the pride of place for actual experience in its insistence that intellectual intercourse with being-as-such will eventuate in knowledge in a stepwise consideration of beings as they are incrementally encountered in the world under the aspect of seeking their totality (SW 11.3: 130 & n). This will not in itself open being-as-such to complete inspection, but his clear hope is that the more one actually experiences the more one will realize the dependency of thought on the contingently given in ways that do not impermissibly reduce the contingency to whatever thought may be necessary for various experiences. Although heavy weather is sometimes made over how much of a departure

[33] In laying out the relationships of Schelling, Hegel, and Kierkegaard to one another in schematic form, one could do worse than arranging them in terms of which part of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity is most central to their concerns. For Hegel this would be the Holy Spirit, for Kierkegaard Christ at the moment of crucifixion, and for Schelling the sublime and inscrutable God the Father. Schelling may have disagreed with this taxonomy. See his characterization of the starting point of Hegelian metaphysics as a *kenôsis* (SW 1.10: 137). This is quite misleading. Schelling must mean simply that the category "Being" in the *Logic* is empty. But he might also mean – a bit more positively and theologically – that Hegel's logic holds itself open to God (being-as-such). In a way, Hegel's logic does do this in Schelling's estimation, but not without the help of the "positive" philosopher.

Schelling's late philosophy is from his earlier work, one might say that the kernel of the Positive Philosophy is present in his work from the start. This is, again, the specific idea of intellectual intuition and the relation of universality to particularity present in it. As soon as thought contacts world, structures of universality and particularity lock in place. Intellectual intuition for Schelling takes as its "object" universality as it discovers it dispersed in the world through particulars, which house the universal. This is for Schelling the basic structure of universality, one that cannot be discovered by the machinations of mind alone. Such intuition is proleptic, a conatus; it must be articulated by additional, discursive means.

Being open to being is not going to generate much in the form of a philosophy, and Schelling forwards a three-step regimen for building upon that orientation on being-as-such. First, and still at a somewhat intuitional level, the philosopher construes this openness as expressing freedom on her part and, correlatively as having a certain affective content. Schelling uses various terms to attempt to capture the affective content, all orbiting Aristotle's idea that philosophy starts in wonder [*Erstaunen*, *Überraschung*, *Wunder*, *admiror*, θαυμάζω]. In a way, the Latin "admiror" captures best the operation of the inversion on the philosopher's attitude: its deponent form suggests receptivity or reversal and its lexis does the same for the idea of mirroring. The freedom expressed in the posture of the positive philosopher going forward is not something that can be proven either a priori or a posteriori; it is part and parcel of the acknowledgment of being-as-such. This idea of freedom – which Schelling treats as continuous with the exposition in his 1809 essay on the subject – is radically non-standard within German Idealism because it is not inherently connected with pure rationality. Instead, it is the freedom that comes from also being part of being-as-such and, hence, being "more than" a mere possible thought-determination. It is "ecstatic" (SW 11.3: 168f.) In this way, the philosophical intuition from which the positive philosopher embarks is decisional for Schelling – not ratiocinative, but decisive. Next, the positive philosopher regards her interactions in the world under the aspect of being-as-such being hidden in or dispersed through her encounters. Thought is led in its contingent interactions with the world to uncover more and more knowledge that, when it accumulates, shows more and more preexisting, dispersed structure that answers to the demands of thought – what Schelling calls "revelation" (see SW 11.3: 159). Schelling's is an odd sort of empiricism, according to which the more one experiences the world the more the world's structure antecedent to thought is discovered through thought to be compatible with thought. A posteriori

experience reveals structure that is sown into nature prior to thought, but this advance cannot be the result merely of cumulative induction. The accumulation has a meaning, supplied by its connection with the intuition from which it started out, i.e., that the more one can coherently work one's way through nature discursively the more its having already been created that way is orientational. Incredible though it may strike one, Schelling's view is similar to inference to best explanation. That such inferences are routinely deployed in common life would have struck Schelling, and the degree to which science relies upon such was suggestive to him (especially when the sciences he cared about most, biology and chemistry, were in early stages when such inferences were more speculative). Some have argued that inference to best explanation is not a particularly solid form of inference since it loosens the hold of truth on holding-true. But Schelling's Positive Philosophy is not after truth – he is very clear on this point. It is, rather, an interpretation of how the weight of discursive success in the world is to be felt. Sometimes, Schelling's Positive Philosophy is called "positivist." Well of course there are many senses to this term, and most of those present in Europe in the mid- to late-nineteenth century are not closely related to what many mean when they call philosophy "positivist." But if what is meant is a self-conception of empirical or even mathematical science as exhaustive of being-as-such, Schelling would reject the label as applied to him out of hand. No matter how necessary a posteriori experience is in its own right and for "revelation" in Schelling's sense of the term, what is revealed is a depth that can never be plumbed of being-as-such among beings. Third and last, nature is, then, "divine" because the overlap of the structure of the world and that of thought is found out to be not a projection of thought alone. That there is overlap, what kind of overlap there is, and what might not overlap is outside one's control.[34]

Whatever clarification this reconstruction can offer about the motive and method of Schelling's Positive Philosophy, it cannot remove the conviction that in the end he is forwarding an a priori claim[35] about intelligible structure, even if it is the case that the structure is not grounded

[34] See SW II.4: 104 where Schelling glosses Luther's translation of John 1:1 by reinserting the Greek "λόγος": "*Im Anfang . . . war der Logos*" (emphasis in original). Schelling says here that that the phrase "in the beginning" is to be "strictly understood," i.e., that there is nothing but being in the first place and that, therefore, it carries its structure or its "account" in itself.

[35] Indeed, a regulative one. See SW II.1: 325–7. This fits nicely with the idea that empirical progress discloses God along the lines of something like inference to best explanation.

in thought and has to be discovered a posteriori.[36] That is, in the end Positive Philosophy seems to be negative. This verdict seems to me inescapable. As disheartening as it might have been for Schelling to face up to this, any incoherence on this count turned out to be of little consequence to the subsequent development of European philosophy. Schelling left no school; his legacy for later philosophy consists in being an obstacle to the further development of Hegelianism as a metaphysical system. In addition to the substantial role played by his negative assessment of Hegel, the emphasis Schelling places on being as a domain that precedes all thought was, once shorn of its theological pretensions, an important stimulus for philosophers who were concerned to combat claims of the omnipotence of thought.

[36] See Theunissen 1976.

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